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AN UNEXPECTED DENOUEMENT.

"IDYLIC stories of Arcadian simplicity have their charm, and yours are undoubtedly good of their kind; but, as I have previously hinted, we require something more than pretty descriptions. From your writings, I should infer that your life is a very retired one, and that, therefore, you have not had the opportunity of acquiring the experience so necessary in the writer of fiction. Your late attempt to put a little more zest into your stories, by evolving a criminal out of your inner consciousness, gave the critics some grounds for the fun they got out of him. He would, in fact, be as incapable of the villiany attributed to him, as of the agonies of remorse he is depicted as undergoing at the thought of having committed it. What we want is truth of character, apart from which there can be no sound morality—real men and women whose lives we can sympathize with, or condemn, as the case may be. Failing in this respect, we must, I regret to say, decline further contributions from your pen."

"Truth of character—real men and women!" The letter which had been read through for the third or fourth time, was put down with a low sigh, and the speaker sat with compressed lips and downcast eyes in troubled thought, her elbows on the table, and her chin propped on the palms of her hands. A girl of about nineteen years of age, slenderly and gracefully formed, with the rare combination of strength and sweetness in her clear-cut features, and capabilities of humor and pathos in her blue-gray eyes and sensitive mouth.

The room in which she sat was fitted up, in an unpretending way, as a study, and opened into a bedroom beyond. It was nearly midnight, and warm even for the end of June. The French window, looking on to a balcony, from which stone steps led down to an old-fashioned garden, was open, and the perfumed air came languidly in as though laden with invisible flowers. The girl presently changed her position, lying back in her chair beyond the ring of light from the shaded lamp on the table, her hands clasped above her head. In the dim shadow her face took a more dreamy expression, and she appeared to surrender herself to the powerful influences of the summer night. Wooed by the note of a nightingale in a neighboring wood, the yearning spirit in her eyes was making to itself wings, when she was suddenly summoned back to realities by the sound of light taps upon the wall of the adjoining room. She rose to her feet, keen-eyed and alert, and passed swiftly into the adjoining room. A large, comfortable-looking room, wherein were two beds, in one of which lay an invalid, a woman of about forty years of age, upon whose still beautiful face suffering had only had a refining effect.

"Dear mother, can I do anything—are you in pain?"

"No; less than usual to-night, dear. But it is getting late, is it not? You will not sit up much longer, Gladys?"

"Everything is so still and suggestive—I can think better at this time, dearie. But I shall soon be in now."

"My child! How grateful I am that you have the prospect of making yourself independent by and by. How much it comforts me to think so! What would you have done without your gift?"

The girl stooped to kiss her mother's pale cheek and smooth her hair, as she replied, in a tone meant to seem light and careless, "Something better and more profitable, perhaps, dearie."

"But nothing that would have given me so much pleasure. Your mother is so proud of what you do."

"That's your Arcadian simplicity, my dear. I am more ambitious," returned the girl, her lips curving with a pathetic little smile. "Let me give you your sleeping-draught and shake up your pillows. There! That is more comfortable, is it not? Try to sleep, dearie, and dream you have a daughter who is"——

"Not ambitious, Gladys."

"Well, then, possessed of an inner consciousness that does not make mistakes."

Once more kissing the invalid's cheek, and carefully arranging the bed curtains so as to shade her eyes from the light burning on the dressing-table, the young girl moved softly away, passing into the little study again.

Going towards the table she took up some pages of manuscript, and glanced through them with critical, dissatisfied eyes. "No; it will not do," she murmured. "He is right, of course. No use sending unsuitable goods to market!" She stood pondering over the situation, slowly tearing the sheets across and across. How was she to gain the kind of experience she wanted in her quiet village home? Her sketches of country life had been favorably received for some time, and she had depended upon being able to go on in the same way, earning sufficient to give her mother the comforts necessary for an invalid. That day had come the letter intimating that a change was required. She had previously received two or three friendly hints to the same effect, and had endeavored to act upon them, but as it turned out, unsuccessfully. There was no mistaking the decided tone of this last letter, nor did she question its reasonableness.

It was characteristic of Gladys Lenster that, having once accepted the verdict, she wasted no time in bemoaning her unfortunate circumstances. Nor did she try to console herself by dwelling upon the thought that her work had been allowed to be good of its kind. It was not the kind in demand; and her whole mind was concentrated upon the one question whether she would be able to do what was?

Her father had been rector of Greenthorpe, and, after his death, her mother and she had been invited to remain at the rectory, rent free, by his successor, a family connection, who thus satisfied his conscience that he was doing all that could be expected of him. The credit due to him was somewhat diminished by the facts that he was himself obliged to live in a warmer climate; that the curate in charge, an elderly bachelor of some means, preferred having rooms at an adjacent farm-house, where he was spared the trouble of housekeeping, and that there would be some difficulty in letting the house.

Gladys, who had received a solid education from her father, would have been ready enough to go out into the world to earn her bread, but she found her work at home in nursing her mother through an illness, which, although pronounced incurable, might last for years. It had been no small relief to find herself capable of adding to their small income by her writing, and thus to be enabled to remain with her mother in the beloved old home.

A large, irregularly built, somewhat dilapidated, and sparely furnished house, with old-fashioned flower and fruit gardens at the back, where a swing-gate admitted to an elm-shaded path, through the primitive graveyard to the church—its ancient linchen-clad tower, somewhat aslant, and its roof and porch showing many a sign of the efforts that had from time to time, been made to stay the progress of decay.

Fronting the house and facing the main road was a wide lawn, with basket groups of flowers and a shrubbery beyond, bounded by an old, moss-grown, red-brick wall, in the centre of which was a high, narrow, open-work iron gate.

"What to do?" thought Gladys, throwing the torn manuscript—a village story it had been a labor of love to write—into the waste paper basket. It had not only been more congenial; but more practicable than any other work; able as she was to do it in the odd hours when not attending her mother. But it would have to be given up, she was telling herself, unless she could succeed in supplying the new demand. "You may serve as apprenticeship in giving up, my

dear," she murmured, with a little half smile, and attempt to jest with herself. "You ought to be quite an adept in the noble art of doing without by this time."

She crossed the room, pushed the window wider open, and passed on to the balcony, resting her arms upon it, as she stood gazing at the quiet scene before her. "'Truth of character—real men and women.' Yes; evidently what I want is to see life. Not still life, you know," nodding confidentially to her old familiar friend, the walnut tree on the lawn. "Think of my never having been five miles from the rectory! Why, seeing life must mean rushing about to exhibitions and theatres and concerts and balls; and meeting hosts of people! Here, everything goes on in exactly the same way, day after day, week after week, and month after month. One knows what all the people are going to do, and say, and think, and nothing ever happens! Old Tommy Venn's prosy maunderings about his wrongs will never lead to anything. No; he's no use. If quarrelsome, mischief-making Mrs. Greer would go just a little further, we might have a dramatic situation; but she won't and I've used her up, as far as she goes! As to Alice Newton's love story. I've got all I can out of that—three versions, already."

The balcony was in the shadow, and a part of the lawn, but the road beyond, winding down through the village, and the rising ground opposite, terminating in a wave of hills, lay white in the moonlight. The bells in the old church tower were haltingly chiming the hour of twelve, with what was understood in the village to be a few bars of the "Old Hundredth," and a dog in some neighboring farm-yard was howling its disapproval, when the thread of the young girl's thoughts was suddenly snapped asunder. She bent curiously forward, her gaze directed toward a bend in the road, some hundred yards or so distant. Was something going to happen at last?

A woman had come into view, and was running with fleet steps toward the rectory, looking back every now and again as she ran. Gladys stood gazing wonderingly at the advancing figure, In quiet, sleepy Greenthorpe, people did not run about at night, and in that wild way.

On she came, until she reached the rectory gate. Then she stopped, tried to open it, and finding it locked, shook it with both hands, as if in desperation.

What did she want? Had she come there for assistance? Something dreadful in the village—an accident—fire? Gladys hurriedly turned to descend, then paused, standing motionless, with one foot on the step. She had heard other sounds, hurrying footsteps and raised voices; and now beheld three or four men and a woman running around the bend in the road. The woman had also heard. She pushed something she had been carrying between the iron bars, and a moment before the others came in sight, climbed the high gate—a feat of no small difficulty—and dropped into the rectory grounds, crouching low among the laurels.

She was trying to escape from the others! What had happened? Gladys ran down the steps and across the lawn toward the woman, who had turned a few yards to the left, out of sight from the gate. As she drew nearer, the woman crouched lower, endeavoring apparently to escape notice; but finding she was seen, sprung up again, and ejaculated in an excited whisper, "Don't give me up—don't give me up, or they will"——

"No, no," hurriedly put in Gladys. "Do not fear. You are safe—no harm can come to you hear. What were you going to?"—

The woman raised a trembling finger to her lips. The pursuers were close upon them now—peering through the bars of the gate on to the lawn, part of which was bright with moonlight, and part in deep shadow.

"Do you think it likely?" said one.

"No, it is locked you see," trying the gate, "and she could not climb it."

"I don't feel so sure," doubtfully said another, in a voice which sounded familiar to Glady's ears, although she was at the moment too much absorbed to give more than a passing thought to it. "I know what can be done in that way in emergency."

"Impossible!" decidedly.

"On, then, or she will catch the night mail, and escape us after all."

The woman clutched Gladys's arm, with a tighter hold, and stooped lower, although they could not be seen where they were from the gate. There was the sound of a number of footsteps again; and as they died away Gladys murmured, beginning to look a little doubtfully at the other:—

"What has happened? Why were they running after you?"

"I was afraid—so afraid," hesitatingly and absently murmured the woman, as though still listening.

"Why?"

"Because—they are desperate men; and—and I am only a woman, and—alone. Do you live there?" peering with eager scrutiny at Gladys's little dim light.

"Yes; my mother and I, and an old servant. You are safe here."

The woman appeared to be hurriedly debating with herself, and still in great dread, her eyes shifting nervously from Gladys to the gate. Then she abruptly inquired:—

"How far is it to the railway station?"

"About a mile along the road, in a straight line," replied Gladys.

"And they are gone there! No, I dare not venture!" Again she reflected, conning Gladys' face the while. "You are a lady."

Not quite able to come to the same conclusion with regard to the other, and unaccustomed to say what she did not feel, Gladys simply replied, "My father was rector here."

"The woman seemed about five or six and twenty, and was tall, slight and good-looking—even handsome, after the type; but the well-shaped mouth was hard, not to say coarse, in expression, and the large, dark eyes somewhat too keen and shifting. She was plainly dressed, wearing a close black bonnet and a long, sober-colored dust cloak. There was something about her, or her manner, which jarred upon Gladys. But she would not allow herself to be critical. The other was a woman—in trouble; and that was enough.

"Were they going to rob you?"

The woman broke into a short discordant laugh; but immediately grew grave again, gazing silently at Gladys, as if debating with herself once more.

Why did she look in that strange way—why did she laugh if she was in trouble? wondered Gladys, as silently returning her gaze with an uncanny feeling of she knew not what. Suddenly her fears took shape, a terrible suspicion aroused, perhaps by the other's laugh, darted into her mind. One thought had suggested another, she remembered now that the voice which had sounded familiar to her was that of a Dr. Harland, who kept a private asylum just outside the village. After a moment's reflection, she said, making a great effort to command herself, and appear to speak in a quiet natural tone.

"The voice of one of those in pursuit of you seemed familiar to me. It was that of Dr. Harland, who lives at the—who receives patients. Do you know him?"

"Mad people do you mean?" She was silent a few moments, then slowly recommenced. "You are thinking that I am one of them and have made my escape?"

At a loss how to reply, Gladys unconsciously betrayed what was in her mind, shrinking back a little, as she murmured with a whitening face, "I thought that perhaps"——

"You needn't be afraid. I am as sane as you are. If ever a woman had her wits about her I've got mine this minute!" She paused again, and after a moment's thought, seemed to come to some decision. "You look the sort to judge for yourself, and stand by any one you promised to help. Well," after another keen look, "I will trust you. I have been shut up there, and I've made my escape. I should never have got free if I hadn't, though I am no more mad than you are."

"But Dr. Harland is a good man. I know him, and I know he would never lend himself to"——

"Oh, oh no; I've nothing to say against him," hurriedly. "It was—the others—they that gave the certificate—who were to blame."

"But—I do not understand. What motive could they have had?"

"People are sometimes treated as insane when they are not, you know. Didn't you hear about that poor lady that was put away not long ago?"

"Yes, I heard of that," replied Gladys, recollecting something of the kind, and it's having been said that the motive was to obtain the property of the lady kept in durance. "But Dr. Harland would not"——

"I told you it was the others. He thought that what they said about my being insane was true—because—because I kept to the story, and—its so dreadful! No wonder he can't believe, when those that put me with him say it's just what I'm insane about, and that I only fancy what occured."

"You saw something done—something dreadful?" ejaculated Gladys.

"Yes." The woman paused a moment, as though listening again, then hurriedly went on, "I saw it done. The poor gentleman was on a visit—and—it was a summer night, and—I was in the—the garden, as it might be here, to—to—get a breath of fresh air. I looked in at the dining-room window.

They had been playing some gambling game, and—had given him too much wine. They made him sign some papers, and—then—oh! I cannot tell you."

"Do you mean—did they kill him?" ejaculated Gladys, with dilated eyes.

"I saw it! Oh, it was too dreadful! Afterwards, I got hysterical, and cried out about what I had seen; and—then—to save themselves, they pretended I had lost my senses, and got the doctors to sign a paper that I had."

"Ah, cruel, wicked! What you must have suffered!" said Gladys, with a look of mingled horror and pity.

"You can see now why I was so anxious to make my escape—what little chance I should have to do so again, if they caught me."

"They shall not. You are welcome to stay here until you can communicate with your friends, poor thing."

"Oh, no, I dare not," hurriedly adding, "They would find me."

"I would not give you up. I have friends in the neighborhood, and"——

"Ah, you forget about that, poor lady! They are armed with authority, and could make you. My only chance is to get safely away to where they could not find me, until I could prove myself sane. If I could but contrive to reach my sister in London—hush! I thought I heard—are they coming back?"

"Not yet. They will come back this way—there is no other—when they find you have not gone to the station; but it is nearly two miles there and back. How can I help you? There is the junction, but that is quite four miles from here, and you do not know the way."

"I could soon find it, but it is no use trying now. They will be on the watch for me in the road, and there is no other way, I suppose?"

"Why, yes; of course there is! How could I forget?" exclaimed Gladys, with a look of relief. "A much shorter way, too! Through the churchyard and across the fields at the back; you would save quite a mile and a half."

"Will you show me the way?" eagerly. Then, her face falling again. "But most likely they know it, too, and if they suspect I've gone here, they will follow me; they would be sure to think of the junction."

"Yes; I am afraid they would."

"Then I can only depend upon the desperate chance of hiding or outrunning them—unless"——

"Unless what?" questioned Gladys.

"I could not expect it," hesitatingly.

"You may expect anything it is in my power to do. If there is, tell me, and be sure I will help you if I can, poor thing. You have not a moment to lose, now."

"The woman still seemed to hesitate a moment or two. "If you didn't mind, it might delay and baffle them, and it couldn't hurt you. You are about my size and height, and if you would just put on my cloak, and draw the hood over your head, and stand where they could see you through the gate, you might divert their attention, and keep them watching you until it is too late to overtake me. I happen to know there is an up train from the junction at 1.30, and if you could contrive to prevent their following me till then, I shall get safely away. You would only have to show yourself now and then to keep them on the watch; and you would be in your own garden."

"I will do it," said Gladys, reflecting that her mother would not be likely to require anything. She did not usually awaken for two or three hours after her sleeping draught.

The woman hastily divested herself of her cloak, and as Gladys hastily put it on, said, "If you wouldn't mind taking my bag in your hand, you would look still more like me. I will just take this. It is tied up ready, you see," with a little laugh, as she took something tied up in a handkerchief, from the bag.

They heard, or thought they heard footsteps in the road. Gladys took the other's hand and guided her swiftly and silently around the house, through the orchard, to the swing gate, where, diverging from the elm walk, a narrow path skirted the churchyard, and led to some fields.

"Keep to the footpath across the fields, go up the lane into the high road, turn to the right by the farmhouse, and walk straight on until you come to the junction."

"You have saved me!"

"Am I free to tell the truth when you are safe?"

"To all the world."

"Write and tell me as soon as you have arrived at your sister's."

"Yes, oh, yes," returned the other, as she stole softly and quickly away.

"A real adventure!" thought Gladys, as she made her way back through the orchard and round the front of the house. "Yes; that is what one wants—to be brought in contact with realities. Had I been drawing from my imagination, I should have made my distressed heroine quite different; and—even now—yes, I really must make her a lady. There ought to be some love in it too; but I think I can get that out of my 'inner consciousness,'" smiling softly to herself over the thought, as she paced to and fro on the lawn.

Suddenly she became aware that she was being watched from without. Two or three pairs of eyes were peering at her through the railings of the gate, and she could hear men talking together in low tones, as though in hurried consultation. Was it—yes, it was Dr. Harland speaking now, in a slightly raised voice.

"No; do not ring. As little noise as possible. There is an invalid there."

She drew a little nearer, and stood silently regarding them from beneath the hood of the cloak.

"Open the gate," said one, addressing her. "We do not want to disturb the inmates here by ringing, but we are determined men—you cannot escape."

She remained silent and motionles; a triumphant little smile upon her lips at the thought that she was mistress of the situation. "Quite a dramatic situation!" she mentally ejaculated. "Yes, this is how it must go—'Standing in the pale moonlight, she drew herself up to her full height, and, secure in her ignorance'—no, innocence, of course—'secure in her innocence; and the consciousness of the strength of the lock of the garden gate, she faced the infuriated mob with the fearless courage of'——Oh, dear!"

A young man had climed the gate, dropped into the garden, turned the key, which had been left in the lock, and admitted the others.

Quite unprepared for this—she had not calculated upon their getting in—Gladys shrank back, her pulses throbbing a little wildly. In another moment, two strong arms were linked in hers, and she found herself a prisoner; hastily impelled the few steps toward the gate, and out into the road beyond. Meanwhile, the bells in the church tower were chiming, as if mockingly, "There is nae luck about the house," and reminding her that she had to keep her captors from guessing the truth for half an hour longer.

"That's her, gentleman," ejaculated a woman. "She'd got her cloak huddled about her just the same, when she passed me at the lodge! Oh, you good-for-naught!"

"I am in your power," said Gladys, "do not hurt me."

"Come quietly, and you will not be hurt." said one in a clear, manly voice—the tone of one accustomed to command.

"We will carry your bag for you," said another, whisking it out of her hand.

"Do not forget she is a woman, Giles," said the first speaker; "only a poor tool, perhaps."

"All right, sir."

"No; let me." A hand strong as steel, and gentle as a woman's, was laid upon Glady's wrist, as he went on to her: "You must come with us; but you will receive no rough treatment. Unless, by resisting, you will render it necessary for me to use force I will simply hold you thus. Walk behind, Giles," asking the others to walk to the right and left, in case there might be an attempt at rescue.

She was quick to recognize that her wisest course was to walk quietly with them, until the time came to make herself known, barely half an hour now. Dr. Harland was there—he would know her; and it was but little to do to help a fellow-woman in such dire need. She was not lacking in courage, and there was an undercurrent of expectancy and amusement in her mind, at the thought of the surprise she was going to give them presently. "There really ought to be something dramatic in the denouement," she was thinking. "It will be my turn then! Dr. Harland will be annoyed at finding he has been made the tool of those dreadful people; but he is good, and, as soon as he knows the whole truth, he will be the first to defend the poor thing. Still, I think he ought not to have been so easily deceived, and he will just a little deserve to be laughed at. Besides, I must tell him that without the bit of comedy he affords the plot would be too serious."

They walked through the quiet deserted village, but, instead of going on to Dr. Harland's house, they, to her surprise, turned in at the lodge gates of Easterleigh Park, the present owner of which had lately succeeded to the estate, and just taken up his residence there. Gladys had heard that a party of friends were gathered at the house in honor of the home-comming.

As they entered the avenue Gladys paused and resisted a moment, murmuring, "No, I will not," but recollected again, and walked quietly on in the midst of her captors, her head down-bent beneath the hood of the cloak. She caught half-sentences meanwhile, about "the daring with which it had been done—the finding a ladder beneath the window—the intention to keep her at the park until morning," and so forth.

"To the library," said the one who held her prisoner, in his clear, decisive tone, as they entered the house. They crossed the hall and turned into a large room—herself, three whom she saw now were gentlemen, a man servant and the woman living at the lodge, who was well known to Gladys. The young man, who she now guesses was the owner of the house, released her.

"I advise you to make a clean breast of it, and save further trouble. You see they have left you to bear the brunt."

She hardly heard, her gaze directed toward the clock on the mantlepiece. In two minutes the other would have started, and she might speak.

"Where do you come from?" asked one.

"From the rectory," she murmured.

"We know that much," with a laugh; "but before you went there?"

She unclasped the cloak, letting it fall to her feet, and stood revealed, all unconscious of the beautiful picture she made, her bright gold brown hair becomingly disarranged, a soft rose flush upon her cheeks, and her blue gray eyes brilliant with excitement, and just a glint of triumph.

He fell back, gazing at her in the greatest amazement. "Who?"——

"Miss Lenster!" ejaculated Dr. Harland, looking, if possible, still more astonished than the other, "Why what in the world!"——

"Oh, miss, why didn't you tell us it was you?" said the woman.

"Bless my soul, yes! Why did you not say who you were? The woman we were after has got off, perhaps."

"Contrived it as well as though she were sane," quietly replied Gladys, meeting his eyes.

"Sane!" repeated Dr. Harland, silently returning her gaze.

"Am I right in supposing that this bag was found in the rectory grounds?" inquired Philip Gaston, and a puzzled glance from her to the bag, upon which his name was engraved. "In any case, I can see that we are under a deep obligation to you, Miss Lenster. The jewels were most of them heirlooms; and"——

"Jewels!" exclaimed Gladys, looking from one to the other with bewildered eyes.

"Perhaps you do not know that a robbery has been committed here? Two or three men and a woman were concerned in it. She had the hardihood to pass openly through the lodge gate, with a trumped-up story to Jane Green about having been sent down with some things from town, and delayed at the house until my sister could attend to her. But we were very quickly after her, and we fancied that she had possibly got into the rectory grounds.

"Robbery!" Every vestige of color died out of the girl's face, as it began to dawn upon her that she had been duped. "I—I thought"—turning her eyes apprehensively upon Dr. Harland, she went on with a sinking heart: "She told me that she had made her escape from your house, where she had been wrongfully put under restraint."

"You were deceived. No one has escaped from my house, Miss Lenster."

"Oh, what have I done! What have I done!" exclaimed Gladys. "She said she had been cruelly wronged, and I promised—I helped her to escape!"

"Pray do not distress yourself," put in Philip Gaston. "The woman was no doubt an adept in her trade. You could not be expected to be on your guard against a person of that kind. Besides, her getting off without the jewels is not of so much importance. We owe you a large debt of gratitude for having secured them."

"But I have not!" ejaculated Gladys, white and trembling, almost beside herself with the thought that she had actually assisted the thief to get safely off with the proceeds of the robbery in her possession. "The bag is empty. She took something from it tied up in a handkerchief. I helped her to wrong you—I helped her!" covering her face with her trembling hands.

Jane Green, her sympathies now entirely with her dear Miss Lenster," whom she had known since she was a child, made some well meant efforts to reassure her. The men were consulting in a low tone as to what ought to be done.

"Do not distress yourself," repeated Philip Gaston to Gladys. "She may not get off after all, and, if she does, none could

in the slightest degree"—— He paused. Something had suggested itself to him; and he spoke a word to one of the men, who went out of the room.

At that moment were heard the sounds of horses' feet, and the grating of wheels upon the gravel sweep fronting the house. These were the indications of an arrival, and in another moment the room door opened, and Gladys beheld the culprit brought in between two men.

"Caught her, you see, sir!" said the groom. "It was a good thought to send to the junction. She walked into the trap as a lamb! There she was, taking her ticket for the 1.30 train, as innercent as though she'd got bread and butter tied up in the handkerchief! The jewels are all there, I take it. She had the sense to give in, too, as soon as she saw it was all up. Only wanted to know whether her husband had got safe off."

The bundle was put upon the table; the handkerchief—a large, course, and strong red cotton one, knotted together by the four corners—untied; and tiaras, sprays, necklets, bracelets, a glittering heap of diamonds and other precious stones, were disclosed, just as they had been taken from their cases, to be the more portable.

To none present—not even Mrs. Gaston, who had entered the room in obedience to her son's summons, and was whispering some kindly reassuring words to the trembling girl—was the sight of the jewels more welcome than to Gladys Lenster.

"Indeed you must not blame yourself."

"She is not to blame," put in the culprit. "She's true as steel, ladies and gentlemen, and brave. There, you'd only got to make her think you were in trouble and she could help you, and she was ready to go through anything. If," with a side glance at Gladys, "she was a little too ready to be taken in, it isn't for me to say so."

"Arcadian simplicity!" thought Gladys, with a little moue.

But she had found a champion eager to take up the glove in her defence. "It is not desirable that a young lady should possess the kind of knowledge that would render her capable of coping with the trickery that has been practised upon Miss Lenster," said Philip Gaston.

A slow flush rose to the woman's cheeks, and her bold eyes fell. "I know the difference, sir. I beg your pardon, miss; and the next time—There, I'm not going to be soft, The next time I get into a fix, I must get out of it the best way I can. You won't give me the chance for some time, I suppose. But it might have been worse. Bob's safe anyhow; and you may do as you like with me," recklessly.

"Where shall we put her until the police come, sir?" asked one of the men.

Gaston reflected a few moments. "I think—yes—the little north room, Saunders. Just turn the key in the lock."

"The north room, sir?" inquiringly. "Shall we stay to watch her, some of us?"

"No, I will speak to her myself, presently. After a little reflection she may be inclined to give us some clew to find those who left her to take the largest share of the risks."

"It was not like Mr. Gaston to make such a mistake as to put his prisoner into a room where she had only to unlatch the French window, opening to the ground, and walk out into the park, where she could so easily escape," afterward said the servants, among themselves.

Nor did he express the displeasure that might have been expected, when, a few hours later, it was discovered that the prisoner had escaped. By his "mistake" Gladys Lenster was spared the having to appear as witness, and being obliged to narrate the deception that had been practised upon her in open court.

Meanwhile, only desirous now to get back to her mother without delay, she was on her way home, accompanied by her old friend Dr. Harland, Philip Gaston, and one of the men servants, to be left on guard at the rectory.

Dr. Harland had his jest with Glady's as they talked the matter over, on the way. But she was accustomed to his badinage and held her own, even when he threw out little hints about his surprise that she, of all people should have been taken in by so clumsy a plot.

"Just what I meant to say to you!" thought Gladys.

"You showed great power of self-control, Miss Lenster," said Gaston.

"Yes; you did not make the slightest attempt to defend yourself," smilingly said the good doctor, keeping up the jesting tone.

"Against five! No; that would have been waste of energy; better allow you to deceive yourselves since you chose to do so," she

smilingly replied, as a hint to him that she had not been the only one to be taken in. "But it might have been much worse for me. I am very grateful to you for doing your spiriting so gently, Mr. Gaston. You see, I was bound not to speak, and couldn't defend myself. I do not know what I should have done, had you been rough with me." Remembering that even to the woman he had imagined her to be he was considerate and forbearing: "How much I owe you!" with an upward glance into the dark eyes bent so admiringly upon her, and the thought that he looked just the knight—loyal, brave and true—to succor damsels in distress.

On his side, he was telling himself that no knight, past, present, or to come, could have a more daintily lovely lady to do battle for. He had been quick to note, with the appreciation of a man of the world, how free she was from any girlish self-consciousness—how entirely careless as to the impression she might be making.

While they went over the rectory grounds to make sure there was no one lurking about Glady's ran to her mother's room, and found her sleeping peacefully, all unconscious of what had taken place.

"Only two o'clock!" murmured Gladys, as she stood on the balcony watching the two men as they walked down the road, and listening to the chimes from the old church tower; "I feel as though I had gone through the experience of a life-time!" adding with a little sigh, "and all for nothing."

As time went on she was to find that it had not been gone through for nothing. Philip Gaston had found his fate. The critical, hard-to-please, and, in the matrimonial market, despaired-of owner of Eastleigh, who had been a little proud of his invulnerability, succumbed at once, and for ever, as such men sometimes do, to one who made not the slightest effort to attract. He knew his own mind, and was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet. In a very short time the old story was being enacted over again in the rectory garden. Philip Gaston had won his wife.

FORTY-FIVE PUNCHEONS OF RUM.

By Capt. W. H. Macy.

"MANY years ago," said old Baxter, our sailmaker, who had been called upon either to sing a song or spin a yarn, "I drifted down to Nantucket, and for the first time shipped in a whaler.

"How many years ago?" queried one of the boys from that classic island.

"More than you know anything about, for it was long before any of you youngsters were born. You want to catch me tripping, don't you? Can you remember the old brig Norway?"

"No; but I have heard my father tell of her, for he was in two or three voyages."

"Very likely; and it may be that your father and I were shipmates. Now don't interrupt me too often, or I'll put a stopper on, and leave you to guess at the story. Well, I shipped in the Norway, fitted out for a whaling cruise not to exceed eight months in length. Our outfit was figured mighty close, even for that short time. I should judge that if she got one large sperm whale, as oil was pretty high in price at that time, she would have paid expenses, and left the vessel clear to her owners. Well, we sailed in the fall of the year, just after the breaking up of a tremendous gale, in which many vessels had been wrecked, all along the Atlantic coast. We had taken the right slant in sailing just after the gale was over, and had a fine run across the Gulf Stream. When five days at sea we fell in with the wreck of a large schooner, with both masts gone, water-logged and abandoned. Her counter-board was so deep under water that we could not make out her name or port of register, and there was nothing on board or about her that would help us to make out who she was or where she hailed from. Having very fine weather, we lay by her all the next day, and by cutting away a part of the deck and rigging up some shears, we were so lucky as to get out forty-five puncheons of rum, and transfer it all on board the Norway. Here was a good beginning for a

whaling voyage! and, as we were so short a distance from home, the old man declared we might as well return, land the rum, and take a fresh departure. The liquor was of excellent quality, and the marks on the casks indicated that the schooner was from a West India port. She had also sugar and molasses among her cargo, but this was deeper down in the hold, and, of course, much damaged. The wind freshened in the night, and the next morning it was so rugged that we gave up working any more on the wreck, contenting ourselves with the rum. We hauled sharp on a bowline, heading as nearly as we could for the port we had so lately left.

"In those days rum was in more common use by everybody than it now is—though I have my doubts whether there was any more drunkeness. We had our grog twice a day in the Norway, as, indeed, all seamen did then; but this was always under regulated allowance, and two glasses were not enough to do any harm. But now Captain Bunker was afraid he had an elephant on his hands. There was not room for all the puncheons below, as the vessel had all her stores on board, and was pretty well filled up. So there were about fifteen of them lashed along the rail, some on each side, above deck, which made us pretty well lumbered up. If the crew got a free swing at the rum he would be sure to have trouble, he knew; and to come on the coast of America at that season of the year with all hands drunk was not just the right thing for any purdent mariner. He could trust his mate—who was also a born Nantucketer—to look out for the casks during his watch on deck, and see that no one tapped them. But his second officer was an Irishman, and a stranger to the old man, who knew little more of him than the fact that he was half drunk when he was shipped, though he had the reputation of being a very good whaleman. So Barzillai Bunker, who was a fair specimen of the Nantucket Quaker sailor of that day, determined to stand a watch himself, and so look after the puncheons of rum and the second mate at the same time. He accordingly took charge of the starboard watch that night, and some of my shipmates, who had counted upon Mr. Farrell's love of 'the crater,' and proposed to have it all their own way, found their calculations all astray. Friend Bunker was so vigilant and active that he appeared to be on every part of the deck at one and the same time. The gimlet and bucket were kept in readiness waiting for a slant, but no slant seemed to occur; and the port watch was no more fortunate than we were; for Mr. Swain had a young boatsteerer who was quite as vigilant as himself, and quite as determined to see the rum landed intact at Nantucket, though he made enemies of every man before the mast.

"How to circumvent the watchful guardians of the liquor was now the great question; for some of our old salts were determined to have enough of it for one grand blow-out. Two or three days and nights passed, and we were again entering the Gulf Stream on our return passage, and might at any moment expect heavy weather, such as the old Norway was none too well fitted to encounter, even with all hands sober and at their posts. The gimlet, spile and bucket were held constantly in readiness, and the wished-for opportunity arrived at last.

"A sail was in sight just at sundown, headed down across our track, running free, and evidently an outward-bounder. She edged off her course, as if she was desirous of speaking us, but it was not until it was quite dark that she approached within hailing distance. The old man went aft to the taffrail with his trumpet, but did not forget to give a cautionary walking amidships among the puncheons of rum. It would never do for any of us to attempt the feat of tapping a cask right under his eye; but word was passed to some of the watch below, who were in waiting for it. A little engineering had been managed the day previous; and it was ascertained by measurement that by boring upward through the deck at a certain point, the gimlet, if it were long enough, would pierce the head of a certain puncheon. To have done this in broad daylight would have involved discovery, as there must be a great deal of waste, and the leakage on deck would have been perceived at once. But now, if ever, was the time, and old Bill Lambert, taking a boy with him to hold the lamp and assist, went through into the hold, the two crawling on their knees upon the top tier of casks. There was just room to do this, and that only for a certain distance; while to get at the rum, which was stowed in the hold away aft, was simply impossible. Even as it was, it was a very cramped-up place where old Bill had to lie on his back and work his gimlet. The boy holding the light was in a still more uncomfortable position, if possible. All this I saw as I ran

down into the hold for a minute, and peeped in through the bulkhead. Bill was working away with a will, sweating and grunting; and as I thought of what might be the consequences of his success, I was almost tempted to turn informer. But I could not do this without its being known to my shipmates; and, boy as I then was, my fate would be a hard one if I were caught blowing upon them and spoiling the drunken spree which they intended to enjoy. So I dared not do otherwise than hold my peace, especially as I saw one of the veteran salts of my own watch stood over the fore-scuttle, keeping an eye continually upon me.

"Bill at last succeeded in working a hole through the tough wood, and the rum began to flow down through the deck, through of course much more was lost by running away above. A tin pot was ready to catch the drippings, for there was not room to work the bucket in the cramped space. Everything was now going on swimmingly, and my shipmates were smacking their lips in anticipation of the treat they were soon to enjoy.

"'I say!' called old Tony the shipkeeper, down the scuttle, in a loud impressive whisper. 'Tell Bill to be careful of the light!'

"The caution was well-timed, for this was really the principal risk. The rum was splashing and spilling everywhere, outside the tin pot as well as into it. And you will understand, shipmates, that this was rum; it hadn't been deaconed or doctored, and was no such stuff as is now sold under 'probitory' law, which will answer to put out fire with.

"'Boy, come on deck!' said old Tony to me; and up I went. Captain Bunker had come forward again, the strange ship having passed on out of hail, and nearly out of sight in the darkness. As the deck was wet under and about the puncheons, the leakage of the rum was not apparent to the sense of sight but the old man's smellers were sensitive enough, and he soon began to sniff and peer about, until he was satisfied that one of the casks was not all right.

"'Here! this way, the watch! Mr. Farrell, let 'em cast off the lashings and heave down this puncheon, here! It's leaking all over the deck. Down with it quick!'

"The lashings were cleared away, and several pairs of horny hands seized the chimes. But the spile which was pushed through the deck from below offered some resistance, as it pinned the cask down! Another heave, harder than before, the spile broke, and down came the puncheon suddenly upon its bilge, nearly crushing me before I could back out of the way.

"But at this moment a more piercing scream was heard from under the deck, such as I hope never to hear again. There was a rush up the forecastle ladder, and that cry, so apalling to the sailor at all times—'Fire!' Dark smoke rolled up the scuttle, and out through it's folds poured half-suffocating men, gasping for dear life as they reached the fresh air. Barzilai Bunker understood the whole matter, and the imminent danger without waiting for words of explanation.

"'Off with those main hatches!' he shouted. 'Water! water! Form a rank here, and pass down water. Shut on the fore-scuttle. Hard up your helm, there! Square the afteryards, and swing her right off before it!'

"When men are working for their lives they will work with a will; and every nerve and muscle on board was strained that night to obey the captain's orders. The rum-drinking wretches who had brought us into this peril now felt that all their lives depended upon him as the master-spirit. The flames under the deck had gained some headway, but luckily there were no casks of liquor stowed below forward of the main hatches; otherwise our fate would have been sealed. The fight in the choking air of the hold was a fearful one, but we conquered at last, and saved the vessel. But the dead bodies of old Bill Lambert and the poor lad Jake were dragged out, charred and blackened, striking a chill of terror to the most hardened hearts among us. They had been overwhelmed so suddenly by the flames while in their cramped position, that they had no chance for escape, and had perished miserably, long before any aid could reach them.

"It was a sad hour when the mutilated bodies were launched into the sea, and one might suppose that the warning would have been sufficient to make every man of that crew swear off from drinking liquor for the remainder of his life; but such was not the fact. Sailors, it seems to me, are much like children, these sad things seem to bear very heavily upon them for a moment; but the impression doesn't wear well.

"That night we caught the Gulf Stream weather, butt-end foremost, and a heavy

gale came on that tried the old Norway for her very life. We made all as snug as we could, and hove her to under a couple of "three-cornered scrapers," making a dead drift off to the southward, but the sea rose to such a fearful height that she labored and strained frightfully, and there was plenty of exercise for us at the pumps, with life-lines stretched athwart the decks for our safe'y. In the middle watch a sea boarded us amid ships, breaking off four or five stanchions, and a part of the main rail with them; so that the puncheons of rum were all adrift; and then followed as frightful a scene as I ever want to witness as long as I live. The heavy casks were dashing with tremendous fury here, there and everywhere, and completely took charge of the deck midships, for all we could do was to give them room and get out of their way. But the poor second mate, who was near the mainmast, overseeing the men at the pumps when the sea broke on board, was not so fortunate as the rest of us. A puncheon of rum 'fetched away' upon him jamming him against the mast, and his crushed body was swept away over the lee rail by the wash of the sea, after its first shock was spent. I caught a glimpse of it as it surged past the lee main rigging, where I had made my first jump for safety, and the memory of it still haunts me!

"But again old Barzillai Bunker came out strong, as he always did in any emergency. A quiet plodding Quaker he seemed to be so long as all went smooth; but get him in a tight place, and he showed the real stuff that he was made of. He seemed to be everywhere that night, rousing us all from our paralysis of fear, pushing casks overboard to get them out of the way, and with powerful blows of his axe knocking in the heads of others as they drove past him on the heavy rolls of the old brig. By his efforts and his influence upon the rest of us, we were again saved from the immediate danger, and all of us breathed easier when we saw the last heavy puncheon forced clear of the vessel, and nothing to endanger life and limb but a few loose staves of those which had been stoven to pieces.

"But during all this the water had gained so much in the pump-well that we were now threatened with a new danger. The strain of the heavy sea shipped had increased the old brig's leaks, and in consequenee of the broken stanchions, a great volume of water found its way down through the plankshear. There was no hope for us but to keep her on the same tack, and all hands buckle to the pumps. Our strength was much reduced, for besides the loss of the second mate, old Bill and Jake, we had two others disabled for the time by severe hurts received while fighting to get clear of the terrible rum puncheons. But the only wonder to me is that we were not more than half of us killed inthat fearful rally among those casks.

"Clank! clank! the pumps were going all night, for dear life, and no man ventured to think either of sleep or dry clothing, for there was enough to do to keep our heads above water. Rum was served out to us, for the captain, like everybody else in his day, believed in it, though it was not every one that could regulate its use as he could. When daylight broke we were pretty well exhausted and worn out. The gale was moderating a little, but on sounding the hold we found there was rather more water than we noted three hours before. The leaks had gained upon us, in spite of all our efforts!

"But there was a ship to windward of us lying to on the opposite tack. Up went our ensign, Union down, as a signal of fire distress, and eager eyes were watching its effect; for if the stranger made sail, as it was probable he would very soon, his course in the other tack would soon carry him out of sight. We dared not go about, for if the rent in the plankshear were buried in the sea a few times by heavy lee-rolls, the brig would have gone down from under us in short order.

"Our spirits found vent in three rousing cheers when at last we saw the ship set her foresail, and fell off gradually, with her head towards us! She came down so as to hold a short parley, and, learning our situation, she came to on the same tack with us, and remained in company until the weather had moderated enough to venture to lower the boat. Until that time we labored steadily, and more hopefully than before, at the pumps. But this is a kind of work that no sailor likes. It is not only hard but exhausting, but there is too much sameness about it—it's too much like sawing cord-wood or turning grindstone; and glad enough were we when the moment arrived to abandon the old Norway, and take ourselves, with little more than what we stood on, on board the British ship 'Stromness.'"

REMARKABLE BEDS.

AS the Eskimo sleeps on moss and skins, so even wealthy ancient Romans were content to repose on leaves and straw. Ere long they improved on hints taken from conquered nations, filled beds with delicate down, or stuffed them with the finest wool, till they attained the highest pitch of luxury in the appointment of their couches. Richly-carved wooden frames inlaid with ivory or silver, and finally with gold, sustained cushions, pillows, and counterpanes of gold and purple—a striking contrast to the flock-filled trusses of their plebeian brethren. The old Greeks used beds supported on iron frames; while the Egyptians had couches shaped more like easy-chairs with hollow backs and seats.

Climatic considerations must be taken into account by different nations in their bed-making arrangements. The Russian day and night hugs sheepskins round him; and the Pacific Islander finds in palm-leaves a sufficient coverlet. In the tropics, mats of grass answer the same purpose. The East Indian unrolls his portable mattress, and in the morning literally takes up his bed and walks off with it. The Chinese use low bedsteads, often well carved; while the Jap, with an uncomfortable wooden rest for his neck, stretches himself on a matting, and has a lighted paper lantern for company.

German beds are furnished with a huge pillow or upper mattress, which answers the purpose of ordinary bed-clothing. Travelers agree that there is not enough of the Continental bed—that, in fact, it ends too quickly.

Europeans living in the East soon become acquainted with the slender iron bedsteads with tall iron rods, designed to support the mosquito curtian which seldom really answers its purpose.

On view in one of the early London Exhibitions was a Chinese bed ornamented with all sorts of curious and elaborate cabinet-work, the greater part of which consisted of inlaid mother-of-pearl. How useless and extravagant ornaments may be heaped upon a single domestic article was proved by the grand bedstead exhibited in the Austrian department. The enormity of its bedposts, of which there appeared to be at least a dozen rising in spires of different heights, with the high relief of the carving, and the massive magnificence of the whole design, and the finish of the carving in all its parts, made this bed appear not unlike a great model of a Gothic cathedral.

Some of our very wealthy Americans appear to be puzzled in what new form to lavish their money. A brass bedstead inlaid with real pearls was recently made for a lady in New York. On a brass rail which runs across the top the owner's name is wrought in pearls. Still more of a curiosity is the "Silent Alarm Bedstead, to turn any one out of bed at a given hour," the production of an inventive genius in London some years ago. This amusing contrivance assumes a degree of density in the sleeper which no alarm can affect, or else a singular amount of luxurious weakness of purpose. The bed, therefore, acts the part of resolution for the sleeper; and having been set over night for a given hour in the morning, the said incorrigible sleeper finds the bed revolve so as to tilt him out; and a bath being placed by the bedside, he may at once be relieved of all need for summoning a resolution either to get up or take a plunge.

Another remarkable, and we should say, more generally useful bedstead—exhibited in the Workmen's Exhibition at Paris—was made so that it can be taken down and put up again in the short space of half a minute. By a curious combination of springs, the bed can be instantaneously surrounded with curtains, a wash-stand wheeled inside, and the occupant go through his or her toilet without being seen. By another spring the bed is turned into a canopy suited for invalids, who have no need to stir to perform the transformation.

We are told that M. Thiers died in a little iron bed scarcely larger than a child's, which he had used for fifty years. It was wheeled into the small drawing-room where he had breakfast. He took it with him on his tour through Europe in 1870.

An interesting historical relic will be familiar to all who visited Holyrood Palace, where may be seen the four-poster bedstead of Scotland's beautiful and luckless queen, in its faded splendor and melancholy suggestiveness of misfortune and decay.

The darkness and secretiveness of Richard

III.'s character had an illustration, strange as it may appear, in the construction of his bed. Among his camp baggage it was his custom to carry a cumbersome wooden bedstead, which he averred was the only couch he could sleep in; but in which he contrived to have a secret receptacle for treasure, so that it was concealed under a weight of timber. Quite a romance could be made out of its subsequent history. After the battle of Bosworth, Richmond's victorious troops pillaged Leicester; but the royal bed was neglected by every plunderer as useless lumber. The owner of the house, afterwards discovering the hoard, became suddenly rich without any visible cause, and became mayor of Leicester. Years afterwards, his widow, who had been left in great affluence, was murdered by her servant, who had been privy to the affair, and at the trial of this culprit the whole transaction came to light. Concerning this bed a public print of 1830, states that "about half a century since the relic was purchased by a furniture-dealer, who slept in it for many years and showed it to the curious. It was well preserved, being formed of oak, and having a high polish."

Many great personages seem to be careful that their importance should be reflected, as it were, in the luxurious appointments of their sleeping apartments. True, it is said that on one occasion when a Persian ambassador was shown into his bedroom in a certain hotel, where a grand canopied state-bed had been prepared for him, he supposed it was a throne in his audience chamber, received his visitors seated on it, and retired to sleep on the carpet in the corner of the room. But Eastern potentates show as a rule a much greater appreciation of costly beds. A remarkable bedstead was made in Paris for an Indian Prince, who paid thousands of pounds for it. It was constructed partly of silver, with large female figures at each corner, each holding a delicate-looking fan. The weight of the sleeper's body sets certain machinery in motion which causes the figures to keep the fans gently in motion —an ingenious luxury in a hot climate. By touching a spring, a large musical box is made to give forth soft music as a further incentive to slumber. Another bedstead made of silver is said to have been occupied by the German Emperor during his visit to the Sultan. It had Oriental curtains of surpassing richness, heavily embroidered with gold. What a contrast this presents to the simple iron camp beds affected by Prince Bismarck, Moltke, and other renowned leaders!

Among numerous presents sent to a Shah of Persia by one of the Russian Emperors was a bedstead of extraordinary magnificence. It is said to have been entirely made of crystal, and was accessible by steps of the same material all worked in imitation of large diamonds, incrusted in a solid frame. On each side there were spouts made to eject scented water, which by its murmuring invited sleep. It was crowned by a large chandelier, which spread light around, so as to give to the whole the splendid appearance of millions of diamonds reflecting their brilliancy at once. This unique piece of furniture was produced, we are told, at the imperial manufactory of St Petersburg.

In these days, royalty does not seem to concern itself so much about such magnificent sleeping-couches. It is well know that Queen Victoria always includes a bed among her traveling belongings, which is sent from Windsor Castle whenever Her Majesty goes anywhere. It is said to be a perfectly simple bedstead of maple wood, with plain hangings arranged as a tent, muslin curtains, and a hair mattress. Two beds were manufactured at the castle works, one of which was placed in the queen's cabin on board the Osborne, and the other sent in advance to the Schloss occupied by Her Majesty in Darmstadt. The royal visitor is said some times to leave her bed as a sort of souvenir. One, we are told, is at Dunkeld, and others at Baden and Coburg.

BEAUTY.

Eye and heart I must surrender,
Drowned as in a radiant sea;
That high creature with her splendor,
Blinding all, hath blinded me.

AN UNFORTUNATE MATCH.

By Florence Marryat.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. CRAY is a hard-featured, angular woman, with rather a defiant cast of countenance, but she obeys the summons to the housekeeper's room promptly enough, bringing a huge basket, the emblem of her trade, which is that of a laundress, beneath her arm.

"And pray what may you be doing in the kitchen at this time of day, Mrs. Cray?" commences Mrs. Quekett uncovering the kidneys.

"I'm doing what it would be well as every one did, mum—minding my own business."

"Don't speak to me in that tone of voice! You can't have any business here on Tuesday, unless you neglected to send the servant's things home in time again last week."

"No, mum, I didn't neglect to send the servants' things home in time again last week," replied Mrs. Cray, with insolent repetition; "and my business here to-day is to get the money that's due to me, and if that ain't my business, I'm sure I don't know what is. There's three weeks owing, and I'm sure it can't be by the colonel's wish that a poor hard-working creature as I am is kept waiting day after day in this manner."

"It's your own fault if you are. I've told you several times that if you want your bill paid, you must come up between seven and eight every Saturday evening, and fetch the money."

"And I've told you, mum, that I can't do it, and if you had six children to wash and put to bed, beside growing sons coming home for their suppers, and the place to ruddle up, and all with one pair of hands, you couldn't do it neither."

"What's your niece about that she can't help you?"

Mrs. Cray looks sulky directly.

"A hulking young woman like that!" continues the housekeeper, with her mouth full of toast and kidney, "idling about the village, and doing nothing to earn her living. I am quite surprised you should put up with it. Why don't she come up for the money? I suppose she can read and write?"

"Oh, she can read and write fast enough—better than many as think themselves above her—but she can't come up of Saturdays, for a very good reason—that she ain't here."

"Not here! Where is she gone to?"

"That's her business, mum, and not ours. Not but what I'm put out about it, I must own, but she was always a one to have her own way, she was, and I suppose it will be so to the end."

"Her own way, indeed, and a nice way she's likely to make of it, tramping about the country by herself. You should take better care of her Mrs. Cray."

Now, Mrs. Cray, a virago at home and abroad, has one good quality—she can stick up for her own relations, and Mrs. Quekett's remark upon her niece's propensity for rambling raises all her feelings in defence of the absent.

"She's as well able to look after herself, my niece is, as many that wear silken gowns upon their backs—ay, and better, too! Take more care of her, indeed! It's all very well to give good advice, but them as preaches had better practise. That's what I say!"

"I don't know what you mean," says Mrs. Quekett, who knows so well that the glass of porter she is lifting to her lips jingles against her false teeth.

"Well, if you don't know, mum, I don't know who should. Anyways, I want my three weeks' money, and I stays here till I gets it."

"You shall not have a sixpence until you learn to keep a civil tongue in your head."

"Then I shall have to send my Joel up to talk to the colonel about it."

"He will not see the colonel unless I give him permission. You're a disgrace to the village—you and your family—and the sooner Priestly is quit of the lot of you the better."

"Oh, it's no talking of yours, mum, as will turn us out, though you do think yourself so much above them as wouldn't stoop

to eat with you. There's easy ways for some people to get riches in this world; but we're not thieves yet, thank God, nor sha'n't begin to be, even though there are some who would keep honest folks out of the money they've lawfully earned."

Conceive Mrs. Quekett's indignation.

"How dare you be so insolent?" she exclaims, all the blood in her body rushing to her face. It requires something more than the assumption of superiority to enable one to bear an inferior's insult with dignity.

Mrs. Quekett grows as red as a turkey-cock.

"Insolent!" cries Mrs. Cray. "Why, what do you call talking of my niece after that fashion, then? Do you think I've got no more feeling for my own flesh and blood than you have yourself?"

"Mary!" screams Mrs. Quekett, from the open door, "go up-stairs at once and fetch me the washing-book that lies on the side table in my bed-room."

"Oh, yes, your bed-room, indeed!" continues the infuriated laundress. "I suppose you think as we don't know why you have got the best one in the house, and not a word said to you about it. You couldn't tell no tales, you couldn't, about the old man as is dead and gone, nor the young 'un as wears his shoes? Only you durs'n't to, because you're all tarred with the same brush. You thinks yourself a lady as may call poor folkes bad names; but the worst name as you ever give a body would be too good for yourself."

All of which vituperation is bawled into the housekeeper's ears by Mrs. Cray's least dulcet tones, while Mrs. Cray's hard-working fists are placed defiantly upon her hips. By this time Mary returns with the washing-book, Mrs. Quekett is trembling all over.

"Take your money, woman," she says, in a voice which fear has rendered wonderfully mild compared to that of her opponent, "and never let me see your face, nor the face of any one that belongs to you again."

"That's as it may be," retorts Mrs. Cray; "and anyway, we're not beholden to you, nor any such dirt, for our living."

"You'll never get it here again. Not a bit of washing goes over the threshold of your house from this time forward, and I'll dismiss any servant who dares to disobey me!"

"Oh, you needn't fear, mum, as I'll ask 'em. There's other washing in Leicestershire, thank God! beside the court's, and, as for your own rags, I wouldn't touch them if you were to pay me in gold. You'll come to want yourself before long, and be glad to wash other people's clothes to earn your bread, and I wish I may live to see it!" With which final shot, Mrs. Cray pockets her money, shoulders her basket, and marches out of Fen Court kitchen.

This interview has quite upset the housekeeper, who leaves more than half her luncheon on the table, and goes up-stairs to her bed-room, in order to recover her equanimity.

"Serve her right," is the verdict of the kitchen; while Mary finishes the kidneys and porter, and repeats the laundress's compliments *verbatim*.

"I'd have given something to hear Mother Cray pitch into the old cat."

"Only hope it'll spoil her dinner."

"No fear of that. She'd eat if she was dying."

And so on, and so on; the general feeling for the housekeeper being that of detestation.

It takes longer than usual for Mrs. Quekett to calm her ruffled dignity, for she is unaware how much the servants have overheard of the discussion between her and Mrs. Cray, nor how much they will believe of it. So she remains up-stairs for more than an hour, and when she descends again she has changed her dress, for in a black satin gown, with a blonde lace cap ornamented with pink flowers, who among the lower menials would presume to question either her authority or her virtue?

She does not forget what has passed, however. It returns upon her every now and then during the afternoon with an unpleasant feeling of insecurity, and when—the court dinner being concluded—she makes her way up to Colonel Mordaunt's private sitting-room, she is just in the mood to make herself very disagreeable. The room in question is called the study, though it is very little study that is ever accomplished within its walls, but it is here that the colonel usually sits in the evening, smoking his pipe, looking over the stable and farm accounts, and holding interviews with his head groom, kennel-keeper and bailiff. He does not seem over and above pleased at the abrupt entrance of Mrs. Quekett; but he glances up from his newspaper and nods.

"Well, Quekett, have you anything to

say to me? Time to settle the housekeeping bills again, eh?"

"No, colonel. If I remember rightly, we settled those only last week," replies Mrs. Quekett, as she quietly seats herself in the chair opposite her master. "My business here is something quite different. I want to know if it's true that you've asked Master Oliver down to Fen Court for Easter this year?"

Why doesn't Colonel Mordaunt act as nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand would have acted under similar circumstances? Why doesn't he resent the impertinence of this inquiry by the curt yet emphatic remark, "What in the devil is that to you?"

He is not a timid, shrinking creature like his sister; he could talk glibly enough, and plead his own cause bravely enough, when in the presence of Irene St. John, what remembrance, what knowledge is it that comes over him when confronted by this menial, that he should twist his paper about to hide his countenance, and answer, almost evasively:—

"Well, Quekett, I did think of asking him. It would only be for a few days. There's no objection, is there?"

"I think there's a very great objection, colonel. Master Oliver's not a gentleman as I can get on with at all. The house is not like itself while he's hanging about it, with his bad manners, and his tabaccer, and his drink."

"Come, come, Quekett, I think you're a little hard upon the boy. Think how young he is, and under what disadvantages he has labored! He is fond of his pipe and his nonsense, I know; but it doesn't go too far; you'll allow that."

"I don't allow nothing of the sort, colonel. I think Master Oliver's 'nonsense,' as you call it, goes a great deal too far. He's an ill natured, impertinent, puny upstart—that's my opinion—as wants a deal of bringing down; and he'll have it one day, if he provokes me too far; for as sure as my name's Rebecca Quekett, I'll let him know that"——

"Hush!" says Colonel Mordaunt, in a prolonged whisper, as he rises and examines the door to see if it is fast shut. "Quekett, my good creature, you forget how loud you are talking!"

"Oh, I don't forget it, colonel! I've too good a memory for that. And don't you set Oliver on to me, or I may raise my voice a little louder yet."

"I set him on! How can you think so? I have never spoken to him of you but in terms of the greatest respect. If I thought Oliver really meant to be rude to you, I should be exceedingly angry with him. But it is only his fun!"

"Well, whether it's fun or earnest, I don't mean to put up with it any more, colonel; so, if Oliver is to come here next Easter, I shall turn out. Lady Baldwin will be only too glad to have me for the season; I had a letter from her on the subject as late as last week."

Colonel Mordaunt dreads the occasional visits which Mrs. Quekett pays to her titled patronesses. She never leaves the court, except in a bad temper. And when Mrs. Quekett is in a bad temper, she is very apt to be communicative on the subject of her fancied wrongs. And tittle-tattle, for many reasons, Colonel Mordaunt systematically discountenances.

"You mustn't talk of that, Quekett. What should we do without you? You are my right hand!"

"I don't know about that, sir! I have had my suspicions lately that you're looking out for another sort of a right hand, beside me."

Colonel Mordaunt starts with surprise, and colors. The housekeeper's sharp eyes detect his agitation.

"I'm not so far wrong, am I, colonel? The postbag can tell tales, though it hasn't a tongue. And I shall be obliged if you'll let me have the truth, that I may know how I am expected to act."

"What do you mean, Quekett? I don't understand you."

"Oh, yes, you do, colonel; but I'll put it plainer, if you like. Are you thinking of marrying?"

"Really, Quekett, you are so"——

"Lord alive, man!" exclaims the housekeeper, throwing off all restraint; "you can't pretend not to understand me at your age. You must be thinking of it, or not thinking of it. What do all those letters to Miss St. John mean, if you're not courting her? There's as many as three a week if, there's one; and when a man's come to your time of life he don't write letters for mere pleasure"——

"No, Quekett, no; but business, you know—business must be attended to. And I was

left a sort of guardian to my young cousin, so"——

"Fiddle-de-dee!" is the sharp rejoinder. "You can't stuff me up with such nonsense, colonel. Are you going to marry this lady or not?"

"Going! No, certainly not going Quekett."

"But do you want to marry her? Do you mean to ask her?"

"Well, the thought has crossed my mind, I must say. Not but everything is very uncertain, of course—very uncertain."

"Oh!" says the housekeeper, curtly; and is silent.

"Quekett," resumes her master, after a pause, "if it should be, you know, it could make no difference to you; could it? It would be rather pleasanter, on the whole. Fen Court is a dull place at times, very dull; and you and Isabella are not the best of friends. A young lady would brighten up the house, and make it more cheerful for us Don't you think so?"

"Oh, much more cheerful, doubtless!" is the sarcastic reply. "And, pray, colonel, may I ask, in case of this very desirable event taking place, what you intend to do about Master Oliver?"

"About my—nephew?"

"About your—*nephew;* yes. Is he to be allowed to spend his holidays at the court, as usual, upsetting our comfort, and turning the house topsy-turvy?"

"Well, I've hardly thought of that, Quekette. I suppose it would be as—as—*she* wished."

"Oh, very well, colonel! I understand you; and if Fen Court is to be given over to a boy and girl like that, why, the sooner I'm out of it the better. It's hard enough that I should have to look for another home at my time of life; but it would be harder to stay and have a young mistress and master put over my head. Fifteen years I lived with your poor dear father, colonel, and never a word with any of the family; and when I consented to come here, it was on the express condition, as you may well remember, that"——

"Stay, Quekett, not so fast. I have only told you what I contemplated doing. Nothing is settled yet, nor likely to be; and if I thought it would annoy you, why, you know, Quekett, for my father's sake, and—and various other reasons, how highly we all esteem your services; and I should be most concerned if I thought anything would part us. Even if I do marry, I shall take care that everything with respect to yourself remains as it has ever done; and as for Master Oliver, why, I'll write at once, and tell him it is not convenient he should come here at Easter. He wished to visit us this year; but nothing is of more importance to me than your comfort, nor should be, after the long period during which you have befriended my father and myself. Pray be easy, Quekett. Since you desire it, Master Oliver shall not come to Fen Court."

The housekeeper is pacified; she rises from her seat with a smile.

"Well, colonel, I am sure it will be for the best, both for Master Oliver and ourselves. And as for your marriage, all I can say is, I wish you good luck! 'Tisn't just what I expected; but I know you too well to believe you'd let anything come between us, after so many years together."

And more than ever certain of her power over the master of Fen Court, Mrs. Quekett bids him a gracious good-night, and retires to her own room.

When the door has closed behind her, Colonel Mordaunt turns the key, and, leaning back in his chair, delivers himself over to thought. Painful thought, apparently; for more than once he takes out his handkerchief, and passes it over his brow. He sits thus for more than an hour, and when he rises to seek his own apartment, his countenance is still uneasy and perturbed.

"Poor Oliver!" he thinks, as he does so. "Poor unhappy boy! what can I do to rectify the errors of his life, or put hope in the future for him? Never have I so much felt my responsibility. If it were not for Irene, I could almost—but, no, I cannot give up that hope yet, not until she crushes it without a chance of revival; and then, perhaps—well, then I shall feel unhappy and desperate enough to defy Old Nick himself."

Colonel Mordaunt does not say all this rhodomontade; he only thinks it; and if all our thoughts were written down, the world would be surprised to find how dramatically it talks to itself. It is only when we are called upon to clothe our thoughts with language that vanity steps in to make us halt and stammer. If we thought less of what others think of us, and more of what we desire to say, we should all speak more elegantly, if not grammatically. Oh, vanity!

curse of mankind—extinguisher to so many noble purposes; how many really brilliant minds stop short of excellency, stifled out of all desire for improvement, or idea of its possibility, by your suffocating breath! Why, even here is a platitude into which my vanity has betrayed me; but for the sake of its moral, I will leave it.

"But why choose Mrs. Cavendish, with her heap of children, in that dull suburban house? You will be bored out of your life."

How often have those words of Colonel Mordaunt returned during the last six months upon Irene's St. John's mind!

How intolerable have the children, the governess, the suburban society (the very worst of all society!), the squabbles, the tittle-tattle, the eternal platitudes, become to her! Acquaintances who "drop in" whenever they feel so disposed, and hear nothing new between the occasions of their "dropping in," are the most terrible of all domestic scourges; the celebrated dropping of a drop of water on the victim's head, or King Solomon's "droppings" on the window-pane, are metaphors which grow feeble in comparsion! Irritating to a strong mind, what do they not become to that which has been enfeebled by suffering? And Irene's mind at this juncture is at its lowest ebb. From having gone as a visitor to her aunt's house, she has come to look upon it as her home; for after the first few weeks, Mrs. Cavendish, pleased with her niece's society, proposed she should take up her residence at Norwood, paying her share of the household expenses. What else had the girl to do? What better prospect was there in store for her? Friendless, alone, and half heartbroken, it had seemed at first as though in this widowed house, where the most discordant sound that broke the air was the babblé of the children's voices, she had found the refuge from the outer world she longed for. Her father and mother were gone; Eric Keir was gone; everthing she cared for in this life was gone. She had but one desire—to be left in peace with memory—so Irene believed on first returning from Brussels to England. But such a state of mind is unnatural to the young, and cannot last forever. By the time we meet her again, she is intolerant of the solitude and quiet. It does not soothe—it makes her restless and unhappy; that is because she has ceased to bewail the natural grief. Heaven takes care of its own, and with each poison sends an antidote; and the unnatural pain—the pain that this world's injustice has forced upon her, is once more in the ascendant, crushing what is best and softest in her nature.

There is no more difficult task for the pen than to describe, faithfully and credibly, the interior working of a fellow-creature's mind; for it is only those who have passed through the phase of feeling written of that will believe in it. And yet it is not necessary to draw from one's own experience for life pictures. An artist desirous to illustrate a scene of suffering and sorrow need not have suffered and have sorrowed, but goes boldly against the haunts where such things are (it is not far to go) until he finds them; so much the author, to be realistic, possess the power to read men's hearts and characters, to workout the mysterious problem of the lives and actions that often lay so widely severed—to account for the strange union of smiling lips and aching hearts—of the light morning jest and the bitter midnight sobbing.

There is no more curious study than that of psychology. Oh, the wonderful contradictions! the painful inconsistencies; the wide, wide gulf that is fixed between our souls and the world. It is enough to make one believe in M. Rowell's theory that hell consists in being made transparent. One can scarcely determine which would be worse—to have one's own thoughts laid bare, or to see through one's friends.

Irene St. John's soul is a puzzle even to herself. The first dead weight of oppression that followed her mother's burial lifted from her mind, the blank sense of nothingness dispersed, she wakes to find the necessity for restraint withdrawn, and (as she told Colonel Mordaunt) the old grief pressing her down so hardly she has no strength to cope with it.

Mistress of herself, free to think, and act, and look at her heart dictates, she has leisure to contemplate, and dissect, and analyze the haunting query,—"Why?" Why did Eric Keir seek her company—why ask her friendship—why intimate, if not assert, he loved her?

Was the fault on her side? Had she given him too much encouragement—been too pleased to meet him, talk to him, answer the tender questioning of his eyes? Or had he a design against her? Was he really so cold-hearted, so shallow, so deceit-

ful, as to affect a part to ensure the empty triumph of winning her—for nothing? In fancy, with glowing cheek and bright feverish eyes, she traces again and again each scene in that sad episode of her existence, until she reaches the culminating point, and hears once more her mother's words, "He means nothing by it all;" and the glow dies out to be replaced by pallor.

And then comes the last question of the anguished spirit—the question that rises to so many white lips every day, "Why does heaven permit such unnecessary pain? Is there really a Father-heart up there above, beating for and with our own?" I have said that this woman is no weak creature, ready to sink to the earth beneath the first blow from Fate's mallet.

Does this phase of her character belie the assertion? I think not. Strong bodies fight and struggle with the disease under which weak frames succumb, and muscular souls wrestle with and writhe under an affliction which feeble souls may suffer but not feel.

When Irene St. John had her mother to support as well as herself, she stood upright and smiled; now that the incentive for action is withdrawn, she bends before the tempest. Then she suffered more acutely; now she suffers more continuously; but acute suffering, with intervals of numbness, is more tolerable than continuous pain borne in monotony. There is nothing now to stir Irene up—to deaden the echo of the question reverberating against the walls of her empty heart; to blind her eyes mercifully to the fact that she has delivered herself over to a love that is not mutual; and that do all she will, she cannot stamp the accursed remembrance from her mind.

She knows all this; it is in black and white upon her soul. She is lowered, degraded, contemptible in her own eyes, and life becomes more intolerable with each rising sun.

It is May before Colonel Mordaunt dares to revert to the proposal he made Irene St. John in Brussels. He has written frequently to her; he has seen her more than once, but there has been a quiet dignity about the girl which forbids him to break the compact they had entered on. He felt, without being told, that to do so would be to mar all his chances of success; so he has only paid Mrs. Cavendish two or three ordinary visits, offered Irene two or three ordinary presents (which she has quietly rejected), and tried to wait patiently until the six months' probation agreed upon should be completed. When it is, Colonel Mordaunt feels as free to speak as he had felt bound before to hold his tongue; now he knows that he will be listened to and answered. For Irene, amongst many other virtures, has no young-lady mannerisms about her, but is, in the best sense of the word, a woman.

It is a warm soft afternoon in the latter part of May; the little garden at Norwood is full of syringa, and laburnum, and lilac blossoms, and the voices of the children, playing at hide-and-seek amongst the bushes, come pleasantly in at the opened windows. Mrs. Cavendish has left the house to call upon some friend, and Irene and Colonel Mordaunt are alone.

"I hope you received your dividends all right this quarter?" he commences by saying; for since her orphanhood he has taken sole charge of her small income.

"Oh, yes, thank you! I sent your check to the bank, and there was no difficulty about the matter. You are most punctual in your payments."

"Will you be as punctual, Irene? You have not forgetten, have you, what you promised to give me in May?"

The color mounts to her pure pale face, but she does not turn it from him.

"Your answer? Oh, no! how could I forget it? Only I wish—I wish you could have guessed it, Colonel Mordaunt, without giving me the pain of repeating what I said before."

His countenance falls.

"Are your feelings, then, quiet unchanged? Have you no kindlier thoughts of me than you had then?"

"How could any thoughts be kindlier than they have been, or more grateful? But kindly thoughts and gratitude are—are not love, Colonel Mordaunt."

"Then you are not yet cured of the old wound, Irene?"

The girl leans her cheek against the window-still, and gazes with languid heavy eyes into the open space beyond.

"For God's sake, don't speak of it?"

But he continues:—

"Six months' reflection has not had the power to convince you that the most mortifying of all enterprises is the attempt to regain our influences over an errant heart."

"I have never attempted to regain it!"

she exclaims, indignantly. "I would not take it were it offered me! I have done with the name and the thought of the thing forever."

She looks so beautiful—so strangely as she did of old, with the hot angry color rising and falling in her face, that he is more than ever eager to win her for himself.

"Then, Irene, what are you waiting for? My home is open to you; why not accept it? I am sure you are not happy here."

"Oh, I am well enough! The children bored me at first; but I am getting used to them, as I am to everything else," with a deep sigh.

"I cannot believe you, Irene. You, who have been accustomed, both during your father's and mother's lifetime, to be feted and amused, and carried hither and thither; you cannnt be contented to spend your days in this small cottage, with no better company than your aunt, and her governess, and her overgrown boys. It cannot go on, my child; it will kill you!"

"I am tougher than you think. I wish that I were not."

"You are bearing up wonderfully, but you will break down at last. Come, Irene, let me reason with you. You acknowledged just now that all you desire is to forget this disappointment. Why not try to forget it in my house as well as in this?"

She shudders slightly, but he sees it.

"Colonel Mordaunt, it is impossible!"

"I cannot see the impossibility. I know that you are not in love with me, but I am content to be in love with you. I am content to make you mistress of my fortune and my house, and everything I possess, in return for yourself. It is a fair bargain, if you will but subscribe to it."

"Oh, it is not fair! You do not know what you are agreeing to—how terribly you might feel it afterwards."

"I am willing to take the risk."

She hesitates a moment; it is very sweet to a woman to feel she is loved so entirely, and recklessly, and devotedly, that her possession is the only one thing in this world that her lover acknowledges worth living for. It is sweet to be loved, even when we can give nothing in return. A selfish satisfaction that has no part nor lot in the first requirement of the divine passion—self-abnegation; but still it falls soothingly upon the wounded spirit that has been rudely thrust from its legitimate resting-place. It is not so sweet as loving, but it is the next best thing, and Irene feels gratitude and hesitation. After all, can any change make her position worse than it is now?

Colonel Mordaunt sees the hesitaiion, and forgets the shudder which preceded it.

"Irene, my dearest girl, think of what I say. You imagine that life is over for you; that it can never have any charm again; that it will be all the same if you pass the remainder of it here or anywhere. Then come to me! Fen Court, at the least, is as comfortable a home as Laburnum Cottage; here you are but a guest, there you will be a mistress, and have—may I say it?—as devoted a friend as any you will find in Norwood. Will you not come?"

He pleads with as much earnestness as though he had been young, his fine face lighted up as only love can light up a man's countenance, and his firm hands closed upon her own. The day is nearly won. It is on her very lips to answer "yes," when, from beyond the garden-gate, comes the sound of that most irrepressible of acclimatisation, the Italian organ, and the air it murders is that of the "Blue Danube" waltzes.

"No, no!" cries Irene, as both hands wrench themselves away from his and go up with startling energy to shut out the maddening strains, "you must not—you shall not ask me that again! I have told you that it is impossible!" And with that leaves him to himself.

Colonel Mordaunt is bitterly disappointed, he had made so sure, he can hardly say why, that this final appeal would be crowned with success, that the girls determinate refusal comes on him like a great blow. He can hardly believe that he will really lose her—that she will not return and tell him it was a mistake; and in that belief he still lingers about the cottage—futilely.

Mrs. Cavendish returns and begs him to remain to tea, but he declines, with thanks. The opportunity for speaking to Irene by herself is over, and he is not likely to derive any further benefit from seeing her in the presence of the governess and children. So he returns to his hotel for the night, not having quite made up his mind whether he shall bid the inmates of the cottage a formal farewell upon the morrow, or slip back to Leicestershire as he had come from it—unnoticed. With the morning, however, he

finds his courage has evaporated, and that he cannot leave Norwood without at least looking in her fair face again.

So, after having made a pretence of eating breakfast, the poor old gentleman (all the poorer for being old, and feeling his age at this moment more acutely than any youngster can imagine for him) strolls up to Laburnum Cottage, and enters at the wicket gate.

The lawn is covered with children, playing croquet with their governess and mother, who nods to him as he enters, with an inclination of her head towards the open door.

"Irene is in the school-room," she says, gayly.

But Irene is not in the school-room, she has seen him enter, and comes to meet him in the narrow passage, clad in a soft muslin robe of white and black, the shape, and folds, and general appearance of which he ever afterwards remembers.

"Colonel Mordaunt," she says, hurriedly, with heightened color, and trembling parted lips, "were you sincere in what you told me yesterday, that you would take me for your wife, just as I am, without one particle of love in me, except for a shameful memory?"

"Irene, you know I was!"

"Then take me!" she answers, as she submits to the arms that are thrown about her, and the lips that are laid upon her own.

Women are problems, *cela va sans dire*; though why the problem should remain insoluable, is, perhaps, less due to their intricacy than the muddle-heads who strive to fathom them by beginning at the wrong end. I don't know what reason Colonel Mordaunt may assign to this apparently sudden change in Irene St. John's sentiments; perhaps he attributes it to the effect of deliberation—more likely to the irresistibility of his own pleading, but anyway he is quite satisfied with the result.

Mrs. Cavendish is not in the least surprised, but thinks it the very best thing her niece could do; and the governess and children became quite excited at the prospect of a wedding. No one is surprised, indeed, after the lapse of half an hour, unless it be Irene herself; and even she, once reconciled to the idea, tells her own heart that it is fate, and she might have guessed that it would end so all along.

Perhaps I have even failed in surprising my reader? Yet there had been an impetus, and a very strong one, given to Irene St. John's will that day.

The impetus came in a letter bearing the postmark of Berwick, where Mrs. Cavendish's daughter Mary was staying with some friends, and which letter her mother had read aloud for the benefit of the breakfast table.

"We were at such a grand party last week," (so part of Mary's innocent communication ran) "at Lord Norham's. I wore my blue silk, with the pearl ornaments you lent me, and they were so much admired. Lord Muiraven (Lord Norham's eldest son) was there, and Mr. Keir. Lord Muiraven danced twice with me, but his brother never even spoke to me, which I thought rather rude. However, he is engaged to be married to a Miss Robertson, such a pretty girl, and had no eyes for any one else. They danced together all the evening. Mr. Keir is considered handsome, but I like Lord Muiraven best."

"Very complimentary to Mary, I'm sure," remarked the gratified mother, as she refolded the letter. "My dear Irene, I wish you would just reach me down the "Peerage." What a thing it would be if Lord Muiraven took a fancy to the girl!"

Voila tout.

Irene St. John having once make up her mind to accept Colonel Mordaunt's offer, puts no obstacle in the way of an early marriage, on the contrary, she appears almost feverishly anxious that the matter should be settled and done with as soon as possible; and, as they have none to consult but themselves, and her will is law, the wedding is fixed to take place during the succeeding month. All that she stipulates for is that it shall be perfectly private. She believes she has strength to go through all that is before her, but she would prefer not testing that strength in public; and her first consideration now is for the feelings of her future husband, that they may never be hurt by some weak betrayal of her own. So all the necessary preparations are expeditiously but quietly made, and when the morning itself arrives (a lovely morning in June, just twelve month after poor Mrs. St. John held that trying interview with Eric Keir, in Brook Street), there are not above a dozen urchins, two nursery-maids with perambulators, and a stray baker-boy,

hanging about the wicket of Laburnum Cottage to see the bride step into her carriage. The paucity of Irene's male relations has made it rather difficult to find any one to stand in the position of a father to her on this occasion; but her uncle Mr. Campbell, takes that responsibility on himself, and has the honor of sharing her equipage. Mr. Campbell is accompanied to Norwood by his wife and two eldest daughters, who, with Mary and Emily Cavendish, form Irene's modest troupe of bridesmaids; and Miss Mordaunt (to whom her brother, finding all persuasion unavailing, was forced to send a peremptory order to put in an appearance at the wedding) is also present.

She arrived the day before, and up to the moment of going to church has resisted all Irene's endeavors to make acquaintance with her, by entreaties that she will not trouble herself on her account—that she will take no notice of her—that she will leave her to do as she best can by herself, until the girl inclines to the belief that her new sister-in-law is most antagonistic both to the marriage and herself, and little dreams that Isabella Mordaunt's eyes have opened on a new world at the sight of her beauty, and are ready to shed tears at the slightest demonstration of interest on her part. Yet she is too miserably shy and reserved to show it.

There is little time, howevere, for Irene to think of that just now, or of anything except the matters in hand, through all of which she conducts herself with great dignity and sweetness.

Colonel Mordaunt naturally thinks there never was a lovelier or more graceful bride, and most of those who see her think the same; but Irene's outward comportment is the least noble thing about her that day. It cannot but be a day of bitter recollection to her, but she will not show it. She will not mar the value of the gift which she has freely given by letting the receiver see how little worth it is to herself. She goes through the religious ceremony in simple faith that she will be enabled to keep the promises she makes; and then she mixes in the little festivity that follows with as much gayety as is consistent with the occasion.

Colonel Mordaunt is enchanted with her every look, and word, and action; the old man hardly knows whether he is standing on his head or his heels; he is wrapt up in the present, and has quite forgotten all that went before it. Even when he finds himself alone with his young wife in the railway carriage, speeding fast to Weymouth, where they are to spend their honeymoon, the vision is not dispelled. It is true that he throws his arm rather awkwardly about her slender figure, and kisses her for the first time as a husband, with more timidity than he would have shown had he been twenty-years younger. But Irene's quiet affectionate manners reassure him. She appears to take such an interest in all that is going on around them, and talks so naturally of what they shall do and see at Weymouth, and of the pleasant autumn they shall spend together at Fen Court, that his passing trepidation lest the girl should, after all, regret the decison she had made is soon dispelled; and, what is better, the days that follow bring no cloud with them to lessen his tranquillity. For Irene is not a woman to marry a man and then worry him to the grave by her sentimental grief for another; she has chosen her present lot, and she intends to make it as happy a lot as lies in her power. She is of too honorable and upright a nature to make a fellow-creature pay the debt of her own misfortune, and especially a fellow-creature who is doing everything in his power to make her happy. And, added to this, she is too wise to call in a doctor and not follow his prescriptions. She has married Colonel Mordaunt as a refuge from herself; she never denies the truth even to her own heart; and if she is still to sit down and pine to death for love of Eric Keir, where was the necessity for action which her strong will brought to bear upon her feebler nature. She may break down hereafter; but Irene Mordaunt commences her march upon married life bravely.

She not only strives to please—she is pleased with all that her husband does for her—with the numerous presents he lays at her feet, the pleasant excursions he devises, the thoughtful care he shows for her comfort. She repays it all with gratitude and affection. Yes, Colonel Mordaunt has done well in confiding his honor and happiness to Irene's keeping!

About the same date, in that same month of June, a jolly genial hearted old man, commonly known as the Earl of Norham, is seated in the library of Berwick Castle, in her majesty's loyal and worshipful burough of Berwick. Lord Norham does not carry out in the faintest degree the idea of a lord,

as usually depicted by the heated imaginations of the young and the uninitiated. His appearance alone would be sufficient to put to flight all the dreams of sweet seventeen, or the ambitious cravings of a maturer age. He is a tall stout man, of about five-and-sixty, with a smiling red face, a bushy head of gray hair, and mutton-chop whiskers just one shade darker; and he is dressed in black and white checked trousers, of decidedly country make, a white waistcoat, with the old-fashioned stock surmounting it, and a brown Holland coat. The windows of the library are all open to the air, and Lord Norham is not warmly attired, yet he seems much oppressed by the weather. and to see him lay down his pen every two minutes (he is writing letters for the midday post), and mop his heated face round and round with a yellow and red silk handkerchief until it shines again, you would be ready to swear he was a jolly well-to-do farmer, who had every reason to be satisfied with his crops and his dinner-table. In effect, Lord Norham is all you would imagine him to be; for agriculture is his hobby, and he allows no accidents to disturb his peace. But he is something much better into the bargain—a true nobleman, and the fondest father in the United Kingdom. He lost his wife at a very early stage of their married life, and he has never thought of marrying again, but devoted his life to the children she left behind her. There are only those three, Robert, Lord Muiraven, and his brothers Eric and Cecil, and when their mother died the eldest was just four years old. Then it was that all the latent worth and nobility of Lord Norham's character came forth. His friends had rated him before at a very ordinary standard, knowing him to be an excellent landlord and an indulgent husband, and crediting him with as much good sense as his position in life required, and a strict belief in the Thirty-nine Articles. But from that date they saw the man as he really was—from that moment, when he knew himself to be widowed and desolate, and his unfortunate little ones left without a mother at the very time they wanted her most, he took a solemn oath never to place the happiness of her children at the mercy of another woman's caprice, but to be to them, as far as in him lay, father and mother both. The man must have had a heart as wide as a woman's to arrive at such a conclusion and stick to it, for the temptations to change his state again must have been manifold. But as in some mother's breasts the feelings of maternity, once developed, can never be rivalled by a meaner passion, so, though far more rarely, it occasionally happens with a father; and from that day to this, when we see him mopping his dear old face with his silk handkerchief, Lord Norham has never staggered in his purpose—more, he has never repented it. Lord Muiraven and his brothers do not know what it is to regret their mother. She died so early that they have no recollection of her; and Lord Norham's care and indulgence have been so close and unremitting, that the knowledge that other young men have mothers who love them and are their best friends, has no power to do more than make them think what a glorious old fellow their father must be, never to have let them feel the want of theirs. Indeed, love for their father is a religion with these young men, who even go the length of being jealous of each other in vieing for his affection in return. And with Lord Norham, the boys are everything. His earldom might be wrested from him, Berwick Castle burnt to the ground, his money sunk in a West End theatre, the *Saturday Review* might even stoop to take an interest in his proceedings—yet give him his "boys," and he would be happy. For their sakes, he sows, and reaps, and threshes out the corn, has horse-boxes added to his stables, and a tennis court built upon his grounds; the house heated by steam, and the drawing-room turned into a smoking divan. They are his one thought, and interest, and pleasure—the theme that is forever on his tongue, with which he wearies everybody but himself. He lives upon "the boys," and sleeps upon "the boys," and eats and drinks "the boys," and when he dies, those cabalistic words, "the boys," will be found engraven on his honest loving heart.

He has just raised his handkerchief to wipe his face for about the twentieth time. when the door was thrown open, and a "boy" enters. There is no need for Lord Norham to turn round. He knowns the step trust him for that—and the beam that illuminates his countenance makes it look redder and shinier than before.

"Well, my dear boy!" he commences, before the prodigy can reach his side.

"Have you seen this, dad?" replies Cecil, as he places the *Times* upon the table.

He is a fine young fellow, just one year younger than Eric, and, as his father puts on his glasses to read the paragraph to which he points, he stands by his side and throws his arm right round the old man's neck in the most charming and natural manner possible.

"Where, my dear boy, where?" demands Lord Norham, running his eyes up and down the page.

"There, dad—the top marriage. 'At St. John's Church, Norwood, Philip Mordaunt, Esq., of Fen Court, Leicestershire, Lieut. Colonel in H. M. Regt. 155th Royal Greens, to Irene, only child of the late Thomas St. John, Esq., of Brook Street, W.' Don't you know who that is? Eric's spoon, that he was so hot after last season. He'll be awfully cut up when he reads this; I know."

"Eric's spoon, dear boy!" exclaims Lord Norham, who is quite at a loss to understand the mysterious allusion.

"Yes, the woman he was spooney on, I mean. Why, every one thought it was a settled thing, for he was always at the house. But I suppose she wouldn't have him—which quite accounts for the poor fellow's dumps all last autumn, you know, father; he didn't seem to care for hunting or shooting, or doing anything in company. I said at the time I was sure the girl had jilted him; and so she has, plain enough!"

"My dear boy, this is a perfect revelation to me!" exclaims Lord Norham, pushing his glasses on to his forehead, and wheeling round his chair to confront his son. "Eric in love! I had not the least idea of it."

"Hadn't you? He was close enough with us, of course; but I made sure he would have told you. Oh, these things must happen, you know, dad! There's no help for them."

"And this girl—this Miss St. John, or whoever she is—refused your brother, you say?"

"No, I didn't say that, father. I know nothing for certain; it was only supposition on my part. But, putting this and that together, it looks like it, doesn't it, now?"

Cecil is smiling with the carelessness of youth to pain; but Lord Norham is looking grave, his heart wretched at the idea of one of his cherished "boys" having been so slighted. It is true that he has heard nothing of this little episode in Eric's life; for when he goes up to town, a very rare occurrence, he seldom stays for more than a few weeks at a time, and never mixes in any lighter dissipation than an evening in the House to hear some of his old friends speak (Lord Norham was for many years a member of Parliament himself), or a heavy political dinner where no ladies are admitted.

It is all news to him, and very unpleasant news. It enables him to account for several things in Eric's behaviour which have puzzled him before; but it shocks him to think that his boy should have been suffering alone—shocks him almost as much as though he had been his mother instead of his father—and all his thoughts go out immediately to the best means of conveying him comfort.

"Cecil, my dear!" (the old man constantly makes strangers smile to hear him address these stalwart young men, with beards upon their chins, as though they were still children) "don't say anything about this to your brother, will you? He will hear it fast enough; ill news travels apace."

"Oh, he's seen it, father; at least, I expect he's seen it, for he was studying the paper for an hour before I got it. I only took it up when he laid it down."

"And where is he now?" demands Lord Norham quickly. It would be exaggeration perhaps to assert that he has immediate visions of his beloved Eric sticking head downwards in the muddiest part of the lake, but had his imagination thus run riot, he could scarcely have asked the question with more anxiety.

"In his room, I think; I haven't seen him since. By the way, dad, I shall run up to town again to-morrow. Eric says he has had enough of it; but Muiraven and I have engagements three weeks deep. You can't be up again during this season, I suppose?"

"I don't thinks so, dear boy, unless it should be for a week before the House breaks up. And so Eric is not going back again, though it must be very dull for him here, I'm afraid."

"Precious slow, isn't it, now the Robertsons are gone?"

"You'll stay with them, I suppose, Cecil?"

"Well, I don't think so. They've asked me, but I'd rather put up with Bob. It's all very well being engaged, you know, father, when you are sitting on a sofa together in a room by yourselves; but it takes all the gilt off the gingerbread for me to be trotted out before a few friends as Harriet's 'young man.' Bliss is only procurable in

solitude or a crowd. Besides, a nine o'clock breakfast and no latchkey doesn't agree with my notions of the season."

"It ought to agree with your notions of being engaged, you young scamp!" says his father, laughing.

"No, it doesn't! No woman shall ever keep me in leading strings, married or single. I mean to have my liberty all my life. And if Harriet doesn't like it, why, she may lump it, or take up with some one else; that's what I tell her!"

"The principles of the nineteenth century!" cries Lord Norham. "Well! I think she's be a fool to change you, Cecil, whatever conditions you may choose to make."

"Of course you think so, dad, However, if my lady wants to keep me in town this weather, she'll have to make herself very agreeable. Perfect sin to leave this place for bricks and mortar, isn't it?"

"It seems a pity, just as the hay is coming on, too. I shall persuade Eric to ride over to the moors with me, and see what the grouse prospects are looking like."

"Yes! do, father. That'll stir up the poor old boy. Halloo there's Muiraven beckoning to me across the lawn. We're going to bleed the bay filly. She's been looking very queer the last few days. Hope it's not glanders. All right!" with a shout; "I'll come!" And leaping through the open window, Lord Norham's youngest hope joins his brother, while the old man gazes after his sons until they disappear, with eyes overbrimming with proud affection.

Then he rises and goes in search of his stricken Eric, with much the same sort of feeling with which a woman rushes to the side of a beloved daughter as soon as she hears she is in trouble.

Eric is in his bed-room—a large handsome apartment, facing the park—and he is sitting at the toilet-table, without any apparent design, gazing at the thick foilage below, and the fallow deer that are clustered on the grass beneath it.

He jumps up as soon as his father enters it, however, and begins to whistle loudly, and to run his fingers through his hair before the glass, as though his sole object in going there had been to beautify himself.

"Well, dad?" he says, cheerfully.

"Well, my dear boy!" replies Lord Norham, with a vain attempt to conceal his anxiety, "what are you going to do with yourself this fine morning?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Ride, I suppose, or read, or yawn the time away. Where are the others?"

"Gone to the stables to physic the bay filly. Have you seen the papers Eric?"

A slight change passes over his countenance—just a quiver of the muscles, nothing more, but the father's eye detects it.

"Yes, thanks—oh, yes! I've seen them! No news, as usual. There never is any news now-a-days."

"Have you seen the *Times*, my dear boy?"

"Yes."

"What! the advertisement sheet—the marriages?"

"Yes! why did you ask me?"

"Because I thought—I imagined—there was an announcement there that would interest you—that would be news; in fact, bad news."

"Who said so?" demands Eric Keir, turning around to confront his father. He is very pale, and there is a hard look about the lines of his face which was not there yesterday, otherwise, he seems himself, and quite collected.

But Lord Norham will not betray Cecil; he never sets one child against the other by letting him suppose that his brothers speak of him behind his back, that is one reason why the young men are naturally so fond of one another and of him.

"I imagined so, my dear boy, that's all. Your little *penchant* of last season was no secret, you know, and reading what I do today, I naturally thought"——

"You are speaking of Miss St. John's marriage, father, I suppose. But why should that cut me up? We were very good friends before her mother died, and all that sort of thing, but"——

"But nothing more! You didn't care for her, Eric?"

"My dear old dad, you are not going to advocate my caring for another man's wife, are you? Of course I liked her—every one liked her, she was awfully pretty and jolly, and *distingue* looking, and if she's only half as nice as Mrs. Mordaunt as she was as Miss St. John, I shall say that—that—Mordaunt, whoever he may be, is a very lucky fellow." And here Eric whistles more ferociously than before.

"It is such a relief to hear you speak in this strain about it; my dear boy," replies Lord Norham, who has seated himself in an

armchair by the open window, "do you know, Eric, from the rumors that have reached me, I was almost afraid—almost afraid, you know, my dear, that you might have been led on to propose in that quarter. You didn't propose to her, did you Eric?"

"No, dad, I didn't propose to her!" replies the young man, stoutly.

"Then why did you break off the intimacy so suddenly? You used to be very intimate indeed with the St. Johns last season."

"What a jolly old inquisitor you would have made, father, and how you would have enjoyed putting the thumb-screw on a fellow! Why did I break off the intimacy so suddenly? Well, I didn't break it off. Mrs. St. John thought I was there too often, and told me so, and I sheered off in consequence. Afterwards they went abroad, and the poor old lady died, and I have not seen the young one since. That is the whole truth."

"And you didn't like the girl well enough to marry her, then?"

A cloud, palable to the dullest eye, obscures for a moment all the forced gayety of his expression.

"My dear father, I don't want to marry any one."

"That is what puzzles me, Eric. Why shouldn't you want to?

"There's a lot of time, isn't there? You don't expect a fellow to tie himself down for life at five-and-twenty?"

"No; but it is unnatural for a young man to avoid female society as you do. It cannot be because you dislike it, my dear boy."

"I have no particular taste for it."

"But why? They don't snub you, do they? I should think you could do pretty much as you liked with the women, eh, Eric?" with a glance of pride that speaks volumes.

"I never try, dad. I'm happy as I am."

"My dear boy, that is what convinces me that there is something more the matter than you choose to confess. If everything was right, you wouldn't be happy as you are. Look at your brothers! Here's Cecil engaged already.

"Poor devil!" interpolates Eric.

"And Muiraven doing his best to be so; although I don't think he is quite such a favorite with the girls as his brother. I'm sure I don't know why, or what they can possibly want more, for you would scarcely meet a finer young man from here to John O'Groat's than Muiraven is."

Eric, recalling Muiraven's thick-set figure, round rosy face (he takes after the earl), and reddish hair, cannot forbear smiling.

"He's an out-and-out good fellow, dad, but he's no beauty."

"He's a different style to yourself, I allow, but he's a very good-looking young man. However, that doesn't alter circumstances. If he doesn't marry, it is all the more incumbent on you to think of doing so."

"I shall never marry, father," says Eric, uneasily, "you must put that idea out of your head at once."

"There, again, that's unnatural, and there must be a reason for it. You are graver, too, than your years, Eric, and you often have fits of despondency, and I have thought, my dear (you'll forgive your old father for mentioning it), that you must have encountered some little disappointment early in life, say in your college days, which has had a great effect upon your character. Am I right?"

"How closely you must have watched me!" replies the son, evasively.

"Whom have I in the world to interest me except you and your brothers? You are part of myself, my dear boy. Your pleasures are my pleasures, and your griefs become my griefs. I have passed many a restless night thinking of you, Eric!"

"Dear old dad!" says Eric, laying his hand on his father's shoulder, and looking him affectionately in the face, "I am not worth so much trouble on your part—indeed I am not."

"Oh, now I feel inclined to quarrel with you!" says Lord Norham, "the idea of your talking such nonsense! Why, child, if it were for no other reason, it would be for this, that every time you look at me as you did just now, your sweet mother seems to rise from her grave and gaze at me through your eyes. Ah, my poor Grace! if she had lived, her boys would have had some one to whom they felt they could open their hearts, instead of closing them up and bearing their troubles, by themselves."

"Father, don't say that!" exclaims Eric, earnestly. "If I had twenty mothers, I couldn't have confided in them more than I do in you, nor loved them more. But you are too good for me, and expect too great things of me, and I shall end by

being a disappointment, after all. That is my fear."

"I can never be disappointed while you and your brothers are happy; but how can I remedy an evil of which I must not hear?"

"You will harp on that idea of my coming to grief!" says Eric, testily.

"Because I believe it to be true. I would never try to force your confidence, dear boy, but it would be a great comfort to know you had no secret from me."

The young man has a struggle with himself, flushes, and then runs on, hurriedly:—

"Well, then, if it will give you any pleasure, I will tell you. I have had a trouble of the kind you mention, and I find it hard to throw it off, and I should very much like to leave England again for a short time. Perhaps, after all, it is better you should know the truth, father, and then you will be able to account for the restlessness of my disposition."

"My poor boy!" says Lord Norham, abstractedly. But Eric doesn't care about being pitied.

"What about the traveling, dad? Charley Holmes is going in for his county next election, and wants me to run over to America with him for a spell first. It's nothing of a journey now-a-days, and I could come back whenever you wanted me. Shall I say I'll go?"

"Go, my dear? Yes, of course, if it'll give you any pleasure, only take care of yourself, and come back cured."

"No fear of that," he replies, laughing; "in fact, it's half done already. We can't go through life without any scratches, father."

"No, my boy, no! and they're necessary, too—they're necessary. Make what arrangements you like about America, Eric; fix your own time and your own destination, only make up your mind to enjoy yourself, and to come back cured, my boy, —to come back cured."

Lord Norham is about to leave the room as he chuckles over the last words, but suddenly he turns and comes back again.

"I have suffered, my dear," he says, gently, "I know what it is."

The young man grasps the hand extended; squeezes it as though it were in a vice, and walks away to the open window.

His father pats him softly on the back, passes his hand once fondly over his hair, and leaves him to himself. And this is the parent from whom he has concealed the darkest secret of his life!

"Oh, if I could but tell him!" groans Eric, "if I only could make up my mind to tell him, how much happier I should be. Irene! Irene! you have doubled the gulf between us!"

He does not weep; he has grown too old for tears, but he stands at the window, suffering the tortures of hell, until the loud clanging of the luncheon-bell draws him back unwillingly into the world again.

[To be continued.]

A BIRTHDAY.

UP from the under-world they come again,
Dim forms of vanished years;
And some rose-garlanded, nor known of pain;
Some pale with tears.

The golden summers of gone girlhood's days,
When all the world was young;
The glittering star-gleam; the bedizened sprays
Where hoar-frost clung.

Rose-scented gales that are the breath of June;
The north wind's bitter blast—
With many voices do they sing the tune
Of life that's past.

And could they tell us of the years to come—
Would it be better so?
But nay; the Book is sealed, their lips are dumb;
We may not know.

I can but wish you what is good and great,
True-hearted till the end,
Nor ever daunted by an adverse fate,
Nor lacking friend.

And if it be that you must tread alone
The long and empty years,
Wear still rosemary for the past you've known
With hopes, not fears.

"'T IS AN ILL WIND THAT BLOWS NOBODY GOOD."

By Agnes Everett.

"WHY don't this little teakettle of a steamer start?" growled Uncle James, stretching his gouty foot upon a camp-stool and glaring mildly about through his blue goggles. "Just like a set of lazy southerners, hanging round all day, after hurrying a man into a fit of dyspepsia over his breakfast! Kate, can't you find a captain or a mate or a purser, or even a deck-hand, wide awake enough to know whether we start this week Saturday or next?"

We were sitting on the deck of the pretty steamer, Pride of the South, which, fresh and clean as paint and whitewash could make her, was advertised to start on her bi-weekly trip from Jacksonville to the head of the St. John's, at ten o'clock on Saturday morning. We consisted of Uncle James, a pleasant enough old gentleman, very much given to growling and barking, but whose bite never hurt mortal man, woman or child; of myself, the Kate on whom he always depended to ease his burdens, do his errands, and answer his questions; and, of lovely little Floss Whitman, another niece, and the prettiest of all my pretty cousins. The blue waters of the bay were rippling and dancing in the bright morning sunlight; a sweet, fresh wind from over the bar brought a breath of the far-reaching ocean, over which it had come and ruffled our crimps and tilted our hats most unceremoniously. The freight had all been put aboard; a few northern tourists, like Uncle James and Floss, had settled themselves comfortably about; the good-natured colored boys, their work over, were playing leap-frog and stick-knife on the wharf; and even I, a transplanted northerner, quite accustomed to the lingering, loitering ease of railroad and steamboat officials, was beginning to get impatient, when Uncle James started me off on my errand of inquiry.

"Waiting for a wedding-party, Miss; you can read all about it here in the morning paper," answers the kindly-spoken purser, whom I finally find on the shady side of a railing "down below."

"H'm! H'm!" says Uncle James, when I hurry back with my news. "Charter the boat, did you say? What are we here for then?"

"No, not chartered the boat, but it is a large party—bride and groom, six bridemaids and attendant knights, relatives unnumbered, and all going up to the groom's old home on the river here, for a week's visit and merry-making. Floss, won't it be fun to watch them?"

"Hy'ars de band!" shouts a boy, nearest toward the street.

"Look alive, boys!" says the sleepy purser, and rattling down the wharf come trucks of baggage, trunk after trunk, hamper after hamper. Up the stairway prance two or three colored girls, whose dress and lofty air announce them lady's-maids at once, bringing baskets, stands, and salvers of flowers, great masses of rich southern perfume and loveliness, which are put about in the saloon and change it at once to a bower of beauty worthy a bride of only a day's time.

"Quite an horticultural show!" says Uncle James, taking off his blue glasses.

"Isn't it lovely?" says Floss, her yellow head bobbing about in the sunlight, and the great hat with its black velvet facing framing her face like a picture. "Oh, I wish I were such a bride! What a lot of gentlemen, Kate, just piles, and nice looking too!"

"Sit down, Floss, sit down; some pretty girls there!" and Uncle James peers down at the now crowded plank, over which come bride and groom and many others.

"'His sisters and his cousins and his aunts,'" hums Floss, and she and I at least feel repaid for our long waiting.

"Load this boat pretty heavily if all those men are going up," says Uncle James.

"Oh, some have only come to say good-by, I guess. Too many ladies, don't you think so, Kate?" says Floss, who knows it frets Uncle James to have her pretend to care for the society of gentlemen. Sweet souled beauty that she is, no amount of attention could spoil her. If she has one desire, one great longing, that she has yet hardly acknowledged to herself, it is to have a home somewhere in this South, to live this kind of easy, happy, out-of-door life; she

likes the hot sunshine, and soft voices, the slow-moving people, and, above all, she likes scenes like the present—at least to outside eyes—all merry and heart-happy and care-free.

"If those people are not going, why don't they kiss and be done with it, and get off, and let us get off!" says Uncle James. "Precious fuss over a wedding! Imagine a whole steamer, up north, waiting round for a mother to tell her daughter what clothes she ought to wear each day for the week she is to be gone from her! That's what the bride's mother is doing. I heard her. Bah! get me my rug, girls, and traveling pillow, and I'll take a nap."

"O Kate, I wish we were part of it, don't you?" says Floss. "Now uncle will go to sleep for 'most all day; he'll never talk with any of them or do anything agreeable so that we can slip in anywhere. Aren't the girls nice, if they do travel in thin dresses?—and, oh, I'm sorry that splendid-looking man is going to get off! He's far handsomer than the groom. See him saying good-by to that lovely girl; I guess she's sorry,—that one, Kate." And looking past him and over him and anywhere but at him, she tries to indicate to me, from among many fine figures, the one striking her fancy at the moment. I turn to look, when puff comes a sudden strong wind, sweeping up the bay! I turn round to keep my hair out of my eyes; Floss makes a frantic clutch at the elastic of her hat, and at something else; but I don't see what, for a second, or I could have stopped her. Just above her head, whirling toward the river, skims a light straw something or other. Months of practice at lawn tennis have made Floss skillful, and, with a jump, she catches and holds up, laughingly, at me a gentleman's hat!

"How very kind of you! a thousand thanks," says a voice over my shoulder, and a pair of handsome, dark eyes look past me at Floss.

I awake to the proprieties, if Uncle James does not, and start to take the hat from Floss, to draw myself up statelily, and to glower like a proper duenna, when the eyes travel round to me, and the same voice says:—

"I am not mistaken, am I? Is it not Miss Curtis? and don't you remember your brother Tom's friend, Mr." ——

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hasbrouk," I say, getting down quickly from my propriety stilts. I am very glad to meet you again, and, allow me, Floss, Mr. Hasbrouk, Miss Whitman." Floss is very demure now and very intent on the scenery (for, during this little episode, the steamer actually started), and she hardly turns to acknowledge the profound bow which Mr. Hasbrouk makes, holding his recovered hat in his hand.

"You came nobly to my rescue, Miss Whitman. How shall I thank you!"

"I didn't come at all," says Floss. "I stayed here. It was your hat came to me, you see, and I just"——

"Did you know you were left, Mr. Hasbrouk?" calls a feminine voice at the moment. "Now you'll have to go with us." And the lovely girl whom Floss noticed before smiles radiantly and looks persuasively at our knight of the hat. He gazes about right solemnly for a moment, then laughs and says:—

"Well, it's not every day such good fortune comes to a man; to meet an old friend, to be rescued from such a predicament as this would have been by so kind a hand, and to be actually forced to do just what his inclination has tempted him to do all along. I'm quite resigned." And, with a smile and bow toward his friends, he coolly draws up a chair, sits down by us, and we fall to talking,—that is, he and I; Floss, after one look, by which I somehow knew he is the same one whom she had distinguished from the crowd a few minutes before, becomes more and more absorbed in the scenery, and finally moves away to the other side of the boat.

I never was meant for a discreet chaperon; in a few minutes I have told Mr. Hasbrouk who Uncle James is, how lovely Floss is, where we are going, and why and when and how. He seemes strangely interested in Floss, and looks often over where she is sitting, and I, for want of something better to say, tell him how much amused she is watching the wedding party, and how thoroughly in love she is with the whole proceeding.

"She actually even wishes herself in the bride's place," I say.

"You will allow me then," he says, jumping up, "to introduce my friend to you all, I hope." And while he goes into the saloon, where already a tempting lunch is being spread, I motion to Floss, who does not see me, and call softly to her, and she does not hear, and then go over and clutch her by the

arm and make her come back and sit down by me, while all the time Uncle James slumbers peacefully on.

Soon the bride herself comes out to see us, then her husband, and the bride's sister, and the husband's brother, and the lovely girl, who seems oddly enough to be always near by when Mr. Hasbrouk is. We learn she is a Georgian belle, and in a large languid sort of style she is really very fascinating. In true warm, southern fashion they take us right in amongst them; they all like Floss, (who can help it?) and her eyes begin to shine and she is her own bewitching self, and by the time Uncle James opens his eyes she runs to tell him:—

"We are part of it after all, Uncle James, we really are. Do wake up."

"Part of what, Miss Mischief! What's all this? and who's that young man I saw you talking to, when I looked up just now? Can't an old man shut his eyes to rest them for a moment, without two girls getting themselves mixed up with all this monkey show? Send Kate here. Bless me, if she isn't talking to another man! What does it all mean!"

"It means," says Mr. Hasbrouk's smoothest tones, and Uncle James looks up to see six feet of manhood facing him, instead of Floss or me, "that I have been so fortunate as to find an old friend, Judge Curtis. Can't you remember my father, Dr. Hasbrouk, of New Orleans? I've heard him speak of you often."

"John Hasbrouk? Of course I can. Are you his son? You ought to be a decent sort of a fellow, if you are."

"I try my best, sir, having always had a good model. Won't you do us the hofior to lunch with us this morning? Mr friend Mr. Lancey and his bride and party will be only too happy to have you join us; we are on a pleasure trip, and the ladies are delighted with your nieces."

Wily Mr. Hasbrouk! in five minutes' time he has Uncle James, who does, of all things, enjoy a good lunch, sitting cozily ensconced between Mr. Lancey and the bride's father, and, under cover of her napkin, Floss ecstatically grabs my hand, and says:—

"He's going to do it, he is! We are to stop over at the Lancey plantation ourselves; isn't it glorious fun, and isn't it splendid in him to do it!"

I am dividing my attention between my ice and wedding cake and a pleasant gentleman who is bending over my chair, but it seems as if the hes in Floss's sentence were rather mixed up, and, when we go to our state-room for a few minutes later, I pin her up to the wall with my umbrella handle, and demand sternly what she means.

"Which he is 'splendid,' Floss Whitman? Which he is going to do what? What is Lancey plantation to us!"

"Why, didn't you hear him asking Uncle James? and didn't you see him shake his head and then begin to smile and thank Mr. Lancey and say 'how glad he was'! I did."

"Floss, whom are you talking about!"

"My Mr. Hasbrouk, of course. He did it."

"Your Mr. Hasbrouk indeed! I thought I had the honor of introducing that gentleman to your ladyship."

"Well, but didn't I rescue him from a watery grave, or his hat, which is the same thing! It is all his doings that Uncle James, through the influence of that lunch and champagne and the promise of more to come in the next four days, has consented to accept Mr. Lancey's invitation, and join in the festivities. Tell me he isn't splendid, Kate Curtis! We are so lucky!" and she hops from the wall to the middle of the lower berth, and her eyes fairly gleam with the fun and happiness.

"Floss," I say solemnly, "we've nothing to wear. You have no idea of the clothes those gingham-dressed, alpacaed girls out there have stored away in their trunks; gorgeous evening dresses, with the laces and jewels of two or three centuries, in which they will blossom out, like their own magnificent roses, where the balls and receptions begin. We can't do it, Floss. I must tell Uncle James."

"Oh, please, Kate!" and in surprise, I see Floss's face all clouds and frowns and puckers, and I think—yes, I know—two great tears are splashing down her cheeks.

"We can manage beautifully, Kate, with flowers and things. I'll fix us. Don't say no. I never had such a chance for fun before, and I would so like to go."

An idea comes to me. "Floss," I say, "do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Yes, with gentleman's hats; I'm attached to that hat, Kate. Don't tear me away from it."

I see I will have to yield, and say as much as I go out the door.

A few minutes later Mr. Hasbrouk comes

out from the state-room next ours, and I wonder for a moment, if the partitions are thick between the rooms, and then forget all about it in the interest of watching for alligators, helping Uncle James to load for his vain attempts at hitting them, and becoming better acquainted with our new friends.

When the tender twilight begins to settle on the river, and just as the banks grow dim and shadowy, the little steamer turns her head steadily toward the shore, and we see a long, narrow landing stretching out into the water from amidst a grove of wild oranges, on which the last rays of sunlight gleam now and then as on a flame-lit globe.

"This is our stopping place, Judge Curtis," says Mr. Lancey, and right after him comes Mr Hasbrouk.

"Miss Whitman," he says to Floss, "won't you take me under your protection? You ought to consider me a sort of ward of yours, for it is owing entirely to you that I am here."

"Owing to me. To an ill wind, rather," says Floss, saucily.

"Well, it brought me good. Allow me"—and he starts to take up Floss's satchel.

"Mr. Hasbrouk, do you remember where you put my shawl this morning?" says a slow, soft voice close by us, and turning, Miss Brevard, the Georgia belle and beauty, smiles upon us. Obediently, Mr. Hasbrouk goes in quest; Floss laughs softly to herself; but doesn't look at me.

"Oh, yes," I think. "I've seen this sort of thing. Miss Brevard considers him her property, evidently. Wonder how he feels on the subject! If it were any one but Floss I would like to see a trial between a northern rose-in-bloom, like my cousin, and a great languid child of the tropics, like this one. But little Floss would be crushed out of existence at once." And remembering those two tears on a face where tears scarce ever came, I begin to feel vaguely uncomfortable and to wish we had not consented to stay. Some people might say I was rather premature in my ideas, but I know these quick southern natures, and I have seen many a long, happy-after married life come out of a chance three days' companship in this romance atmosphere, and many a sorry heart to which no amount of northern sunshine can ever restore the warmth lost in this land of tropic souls and heat.

We all go up the path, winding in and out among the trees, and come to the house, large and wide-spreading; great comfortable rooms, with outlying buildings fitted up for the occasion, make plenty of accomodation for the many guests. At once we feel at home, and as Floss says, "part of it all." It is a thoroughly old-fashioned plantation: everything is kept up in the old before-the-war style, and luxury and ease reign supreme. Sunday. the next day, we simply dream away; swinging drowsily in hammocks, sitting tranquilly by the slow-moving river, and wandering (but always in the two-and-two style) in the lovely groves. Uncle James is delightfully good-natured. I give myself up to enjoyment, and Floss—well, candor compels me to say Floss gives herself up to entertaining Mr. Hasbrook, or to being entertained by him, whichever it was. One cannot help liking him, easy, cordial, and pleasant, but with a something that lets you know a great soul and a noble heart are the real attributes that win your admiration. He reads to us, he takes Floss to see the oranges, and she comes back with a great knot of creamy blossoms at her belt; he tell us of the plans for enjoyment—of the grand reception, the morning german, the theatricals, and the picnic, further up the river, to which we go in small boats. Miss Brevard devotes herself to us, but I cannot like her. She is undeniably handsome, but her eyes are wicked, and when she lifts the heavy lids and looks straight at me, or at Floss, somehow cold chills run up and down my spine. I feel morally certain I shall hate her, for what I cannot tell, but Uncle James admires her immensely; a small Northern man, outwardly cold and critical, and alert, will always admire a large indolent Southern girl, who flatters him with her marked attention.

We have another institution that amuses Floss and me, it is a maid all for ourselves, she is attentive and helpful, though rather obsequious and pushing, and she principally watches Floss, upon whom she waits most skillfully. It is not until Sunday night, when, by chance, I see her coming from Miss Brevard's room, that I learn she is her own servant, sent to our assistance as a graceful mark of attention. Is it my suspicious nature that makes me distrustful of her when I find this out?

"Floss, couldn't we dismiss that Nancy from our room, by simply saying we do not

need her, and are not accustomed to such a luxury?" I say to my cousin.

"And we set down at once as nobodies from nowhere. To be sure not; besides I like it, Kate. I wouldn't object to a dozen."

"Then I hope you'll have them, my dear."

"Thank you, so do I."

Floss let down her yellow hair that night, with a little sigh of tired happiness, for it had seemed a perfect day of bliss to her. She had led a busy life at home, full of little daily cares for others, and to have a whole day when every wish was anticipated, every desire gratified, to be made first and foremost, and to have her share in every pleasure, was a positive luxury. Southern people excel in that sort of graceful courtesy, if they happen to like you, and people generally did like Floss.

"Lemme brush yer hair, Miss, I allers brushes Miss Lida's," said Nancy, who came in just then, and she began to smooth and comb and braid until Floss's head nodded sleepily, and the dainty lids closed over the happy blue eyes.

"You live in Georgia, Nancy, do you not?" I say presently. I do not see why, unless my evil genius puts the words in my mouth.

"Yes, miss, we lives thar now, 'Specs I'll go to Louisianny with Miss Lida when she goes." She speaks her mistress's name almost caressingly. I have heard of the devotion of colored girls who grow up with their young mistresses, and I suspect here is a case of it.

I go on blunderingly, all the time wondering why she looked up at me so quickly when I asked that question. I know better than to talk with servants, but I am possessed by an evil spirit to-night, or guided by a good one, who knows?

"Is Miss Brevard going to Louisiana?"

"When she marry Mar's Phillip whar else could she go, miss? Nice gen'leman Mar's Phill is too; they's sort of kin. He thinks powerful heap o' her, allers has. Nobody ever come 'tween they two," and she lays down the last braid of Floss's hair on her shoulder, and turns toward me, as she puts down the brush, with a hard look in her eyes that makes me recall Miss Brevard somehow.

I don't think for a moment whom she means by "Mar's Phill," and I wonder to see Floss's blue eyes start open quickly, and her little hands clench themselves in her lap; then I remember, and when, in a very quiet tone, she tells Nancy she may go for the night, and when she keeps her face turned steadily away from me, I realize some mischief has been done, and know I must not talk. I never venture on any topic more soul-stirring than the weather when Floss acts like that.

The next morning, my flower looks as if a frost had struck her, but I congratulated myself it can be only a white one. Only two days, time, and she cannot be touched to the heart, but all the same I wish we had not come.

"Kate, don't you think we could go on up the river to-day?" she says, just before we go out to breakfast. "I do not think we should accept so much from these strangers, at least they are all strangers to me, you know, if uncle and you had met some before."

She teaching me propriety! But I am merciful, though I do not want to leave myself.

"Perhaps we had better, dear; I will ask Uncle James."

"You are always good to me, Kate," she says, kissing me, and we each know the other knows where the trouble lies, and so that is all we say.

"What is this, Kate? Take the boat up the river to-day. By no means, child, what are you thinking of! I have accepted the week for us all; just to oblige you girls; and now here's some new freak." And Uncle James looks his stateliest when I propose our upward journey to him.

"But, dear uncle, we will be more obliged if you say now you find business, your health, anything you can think of, requires you to pursue your journey at once."

"I shall certainly do nothing of the kind. Here is everyone doing everything for us; old Mr. Lancey is a gentleman; he takes me driving to-day. Nice horses he keeps too. That Hasbrouk fellow is going to show me some attention too, for his father's sake"——

"Oh," I gasp, "for his father's sake, of course."

"Of course, for his father's sake. We were good friends once. I think some of going around that way when we start for home," he continues. "Yes, young Hasbrouk has promised me some shooting to-morrow. Then there are dances and such nonsense for you girls, and the picnic day

after to-morrow; I would not miss that for anything, nor have you." And he beams upon me expansively and generously.

"A picnic, Uncle James! you detest them at home."

"Wait till you see the kind of table they'll spread at a Southern picnic, my child, before you make comparasions. I've been here before. No, no, don't talk any such nonsense," and he stumps off to join the other gentlemen, and I know it is no use talking; stay we must, and stay we do.

The next days are a whirl of constant gayety. Floss, when she finds the fates or Uncle James will not aid her, gives herself up again and floats with the current. She is bewilderingly lovely and fascinating; she tries to avoid Mr. Hasbrouk, but he keeps always near, and it is not until the night of the grand ball, that he seems to realize she is keeping him away. True to her promise Floss has metamorphosed our silks and simple muslins, and we pass quite well in this crowd of really elegant southern beauties. Many have come from distant plantations, and from the cities on the river, but we are the only Northerners, and Floss is the centre of attraction. Even Miss Brevard, glorious in black lace and crimson, with the Brevard diamonds, and the Brevard airs, cannot eclipse her. Almost all the girls are in white; Miss Brevard alone in black; but Floss, for want of anything else, wears lavender; and vivid pink roses, and as she floats down the long rooms with her blue eyes shining, and the rose flush deepening in her cheeks, I do not wonder to see Mr. Hasbrouk watching her with wide-open eyes and parted lips from a side window. Turning, I see some one watching him. Dusky Nancy's face with the hard look in it I have seen before, peers out from the veranda edge, and I cannot help remembering the evil eye as she glances from him to Floss, and then to her mistress, who for a moment stands alone.

Mr. Hasbrouk does not go near her; a few minutes later, I hear him say to Floss:—

"Do you mean it, Miss Whitman? not a dance left for me, not one waltz! To be sure I have been off hunting all day, but you cannot have disregarded my note this morning, and my request for all you would give me."

"I quite forget, Mr. Hasbrouk; every one is so kind you see I am spoiled by it all," I hear her answer.

I know she had received no note, and I wonder she does not tell him so.

"You seem strangely oblivious of your duties to-night, Mr. Hasbrouk," Floss goes on. "I have not seen you dancing with Miss Brevard once. She is looking at you now. Had you not better ask her? Pardon me," and she turns to her next partner who comes at the moment.

"My cousin—we are cousins, you know, though not very near—is not apt to need for partners. You are cruel, Miss Whitman," and he bows gravely, but with a blush on his handsome face, and moves to his window again.

I think she is cruel myself, but still I admire her spirit, and if he is engaged to his cousin he needs the lesson. That "if" occurs to my mind again. Perhaps it is only servants' gossip; I think I will try to find out, and when I can, I move near to Mr. Hasbrouk's window, and compel him to come and talk to me. By and by I say:—

"Your cousin is very handsome, Mr. Hasbrouk."

"Lida? Oh, yes!" he answers indifferently; "she is much admired."

"And you are willing she should be? How very generous!"

"I willing? Of course. Why not! One likes one's relations to be praised; it reflects on the family somehow."

"One's relations, yes. But how about one's *fiances*?" I say blandly.

"Miss Curtis, do you, does Miss Whitman" (and his face begins to lighten) "think me engaged to Miss Brevard? That is an old family plan, but neither Lida nor I have once thought of it," and then he goes on to tell me more of himself and his family, and finally to talk of Floss, reverently and admiringly, lingering tenderly over her name, while a deep light comes into his eyes that makes my heart happy and bright, as it has not been for days. When we separate, it is with a warm clasp of the hand, and a friendship is commenced that will last for years, I feel. As I turn away, why should I start to see Nancy move away from the shadow of the curtains, and go down the veranda steps! There she is, and there I feel she has been all the time we have been talking.

I forget that soon, however, thinking how I shall tell Floss my news, and how I shall see the soft light come back to her eyes. I do not have an opportunity to tell her though, for she rooms with some new-found friend

that night, and the next day there is no convenient time, for I will not tell her in a crowd. I rest satisfied though, for this is the picnic day, and I see that it is somehow arranged about the boats and carriages, so that Floss is to go with Mr. Hasbrouk in his boat. She thinks it is to be with a party, and I laugh to myself when she sees the dainty little affair in which she is to be left *tête à tête* with Mr. Hasbrouk.

It is merry work getting off. Miss Brevard starts first with two rival adorers; boat after boat follows, I step in with a Miss Lancey and her brother and cousin, and I see Floss dancing up and down on her toes (too near the edge, I think, with the water so deep there), while she waits for Mr. Hasbrouk, who has gone back a moment at a call from the carriages on the road. Floss looks happier, and I think of the light and glory that are coming into my pretty cousin's life, with a thrill of thankfulness, as I settle in my place, and we start swiftly away from the wharf. A few strokes of the oars, and we are off. There is a crowd of colored people hanging about the wharf, as always, and I notice how prettily Floss stands out, revealed against the dark background in her gay boating dress, as the faces grow indistinct.

Suddenly there is a cry! We turn round in our seats. The colored people are shouting and gesticulating frantically; the little boat is still swinging there, waiting.

Where is my cousin?

"Floss," I gasp, "where is she?"

"Good heavens!" says Mr. Lancey, "she is overboard."

A little straw hat, with scarlet flowers, comes bobbing out toward us.

"Row, row for your lives!" we cry, and we turn back to the shore. Down the landing we see a figure rushing; the crowd parts right and left,—one leap, and we know Mr. Hasbrouk too has disappeared.

"Don't be frightened, Miss Curtis," says my companions. "Hasbrouk is a splendid swimmer; he will save her."

By the time we reach the shore, we are only in time to join a long procession moving up to the house. First is Mr. Hasbrouk, with Floss in his arms; very still and white she looks at me, and I am not sure, even yet, my darling is safe. Quick care and attention, however, will do their work, and though it is a very wide-eyed and frightened child who looks at me, when first she comes back to the blessed sunlight again, I know she belong to us and not to the cruel waters, that I had thought so beautiful a short time ago.

How it happened Floss will not tell; she knows "somebody pushed against her," she whispers to me, and I remember Nancy in that crowd at the wharf, and I suspect, but will not say anything. Uncle James comes back fuming and fussing when he hears of the trouble.

"Must take the noon boat right down to Jacksonville," he declares. "Doctors down there, and all sorts of things. Ought to have gone three days ago, and would if it hadn't been for the girls. Bless my soul, Floss! what were you about?" and he wipes his eyes and kisses her. She makes light of it; we both and all the people beg him to let us stay, but he is determined, and go he well. Perhaps I am not so sorry, for I shudder at the remembrance of Nancy, and, when we are packing, old "Maum Elsie," the nurse, tells me that she is sick in her mistress' room, and I ask some questions about her. She has a lover in Georgia among the Hasbrouk servants, Maum Elsie tells me, and she wants awfully to get there were her mistress.

"Honey, 'pecs Miss Lida never 'll go to Georgia now," she adds, smiling at me. A darkey will see a love affair before even the partiest most interested, but all the same I feel inclined to hug Maum Elsie and—to kill that Nancy.

We do go down the river on the next boat, as Uncle James decided. We say good-by gratefully and we trust gracefully; the picnic people return, and Miss Brevard is graciously shocked and sweetly considerate. I wish I did not feel as if she did not have cared if the accident (if accident it were) had not terminated so happily. When we take our places on the steamer's deck, Mr. Hasbrouk, in traveling costume, sits down quietly by us.

"I want to be on hand in case of accidents, Miss Whitman," he says.

They have not met since he laid her cold little head on the library couch.

"I trust your hat is fastened on securely," says Floss.

"If not you are here," he replies, "and ill winds bring me only good."

"Yes, I am here," she answers contentedly.

Once again I was part of a wedding ex-

cursion, and dear Floss has now her heart's desire in a southern home, with a warm southern heart as her strength and her refuge.

We sometimes wonder who believes the most in that ill wind from over the "Bar," Mr. Hasbrouk, with lovely Floss for the treasure it brought him; or Miss Brevard, who revels in a California palace, with her bonanza king, instead of the old-fashioned southern mansion of the Hasbrouks, to which her family decided she should go.

Perhaps, after all, it is Uncle James and I, for we have always a refuge for our weary brains, and a resting place for our tired feet, in the sleepy warmth and luxury of Floss's New Orleans home.

ABOUT MISERS.

FEW people are able to realize to themselves the all absorbing passion for hoarding which engrosses, to the exclusion of all others, the heart of the miser. Curiously enough, this craving for secreting wealth is a product of civilization, which has grown up with society, and become more developed as gold and silver became emblems of wealth. The occupation and ambition of a miser's life is not to accumulate for himself or his children or relations, but for the same reason that a magpie steals a silver spoon, for the pleasure of hiding it.

Daniel Dancer was one of the class of misers who hoarded money for the pleasure of secreting it. In this he but followed an hereditary tendency, as his father and grandfather had all done the same. It had been said that miserly instincts as a general rule are not inherited, but this case was undoubtedly an exception; for not only himself but his brothers and sisters were all of a miserly disposition. He was born in the beginning of the eighteenth century at Weald, a village near Harrow, and on the death of his father, Daniel, the eldest son, inherited a fair estate. He suffered great uneasiness at this time on account of a feeling of certainty which possessed him that his father had concealed large sums of money about the premises. His trouble was not occasioned so much by the idea that the money might not be discovered, but from the fear that his brothers might find it and not give it to him. Ultimately, about two hundred pounds in gold and silver coin was discovered enclosed in two pewter dishes buried beneath a gate-post, and nothing more was ever found.

Dancer spent the whole of his life in the house on Harrow Weald Common, and a dreary, wretched blank that life was. The house stood in about eighty acres of rich meadow-land, with some fine oak-trees upon it; and there was also a small farm adjoining. The whole, if properly cultivated, might at that time have brought a nice little income. But cultivation is expensive, so he preferred to let everything run to grass. The house was never repaired, and gradually fell into sad decay. The gates on the premises were all off their hinges, and the hedges were allowed to grow useless. He also practised a rigid economy upon his own person. He seldom washed his hands and face, and when he did, dispensed with the luxury of either soap or towel. His tattered clothes, of which the original colors were unrecognizable, were held together by means of a hayband wound round his body, his legs being encased in a similar covering. A more forlorn or wretched looking object it would be impossible to imagine; and yet at this time he was in possession of property of the annual value of three thousand pounds.

As he at this time lived alone, being too penurious to allow himself help of any kind, his dwelling offered a temptation to robbery that was not likely to be resisted. His well known avarice was an excuse, and seemed also a palliation for the crime. On several occasions thieves broke into the house, and once or twice he was nearly hanged in the endeavor to extort from him a confession where he had hidden his money. At length he securely nailed up all the doors and windows of his house, save one on the upper floor, which he entered by means of a ladder, dragging it in after him like Robinson Crusoe.

As no man is wholly bad, so this miserable

miser had one good quality. Lady Tempest, his nearest neighbor, pitied the man, and had been kind to him, visting him when he was ill, and endeavoring to persuade him to allow himself a few of the necessaries of life. Not succeeding in getting him to abandon the sack in which he had slept for years, she actually presented him with a bed. In gratitude for her kindness, he made a will in her favor, and one day, when he thought he was dying, he sent for her, and gave her the paper. Having thus yielded up all that was dear to him on earth, he soon sank, and died on September 4, 1794, aged seventy-eight, and was buried in the churchyard of his parish of Harrow. Apart from his besetting weakness—craze, call it what you will—he often exhibited strong common sense, and there is no doubt but for that weakness he would have been a reputable citizen.

John Elwes is a name which has become proverbial in the annals of avarice. Born to great riches, he nevertheless developed a passion for accumulating wealth by denying himself common necessaries to such a degree as to make his name famous. The career of John Elwes presents in many respects a marked contract to that of Dancer, and furnishes an example of the terrible inconsistency of man. His father's name was Meggott, a brewer of Southwark, who died when the boy was about four years old; and it was to the principles instilled by his mother, and later, the advise and example of his uncle, that John Elwes probably owed the most marked traits in his character. Although her husband left her one hundred thousand pounds, it is said she starved herself to death. Her son was sent to Westminister School, where he remained some years, and became a good classical scholar. He inherited about two hundred and fifty thousand pounds from his uncle, Sir Harry Elwes, who was himself as penurious as his nephew afterwards became; and as his own fortune was of a similar amount, he was at this time a very rich man. For fifteen years before his uncle's death John Elwes was known in all the fashionable circles of the metropolis, his large fortune introducing him to the best society. His passion for play—a passion at that time rampant in society—was only exceeded by his avarice, and it was not until late in life that he entirely relinquished it. According to his own assertion, few played deeper or with more varying success. He once sat playing for two days and a night with the Duke of Northumberland, to whom he lost several thousands. Strange inconsistency! that while struggling to save sixpences and shillings, he could thus fritter away thousands of pounds. At this time he was his uncle's acknowledged heir, and used to visit him frequently at his seat in Suffolk. It is said that, fearful that his uncle would think him wantonly extravagant if he appeared before him in his ordinary dress, he hired a room in a cottage near, where he used to call and change his clothes for a very mean-looking quiet suit.

On the death of his uncle, Elwes assumed his name and removed to Suffolk, where he began to keep fox-hounds. He had always been a bold and fearless rider, and at this time his hunters were considered among the best in the country. This was the only time he ever was known to spend money on pleasure. Even then, everything was managed after the most frugal fashion. His huntsman milked the cows, prepared breakfast for himself and friends, then attended to the stables, donned his green coat, and led the hounds, and after a day's hunting, refreshed himself by rubbing down the horses, milking the cows again, and so forth. And yet his master often called him an idle dog, and said he wanted to be paid for doing nothing.

With the two large fortunes which he possessed, and the wretched way in which he lived, his whole expenses at this time not being more than three hundred pounds a year, riches poured in upon him in torrents. But as he never kept any accounts or trusted any one to keep them for him, relying on his memory for everything, his affairs were in a frightful tangle, of which no one could find the thread but himself, and he lost it as he advanced in years. He was a prey to every person who had a want or a scheme that promised high interest, and in this way is said to have lost one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

As Elwes grew in years, his parsimony increased. He took to building largely in London around Marylebone, and this entailed frequent visits to the metroplis. On these occasions it was his custom to occupy any house of his own that might happen to be empty. In this manner he moved about from street to street, so that his own relations never knew where to find him. A couple of beds, the same number of chairs,

a table, and an old woman, comprised all the furniture, and he moved them about at a minutes warning. He used to say that of all his movables the old woman gave him the most trouble. She was always taking cold from the chilliness of the large rooms, coupled with insufficient firing.

His son George having married, was naturally anxious that his father should make his home with him. One obstacle advanced by the old man was the expense of the journey; this was overcome by the attorney employed by his son offering to take him to Berkshire free of cost. Next, he stated that his last coat was too shabby, and he could not afford to buy another. This objection was likewise overcome through the same agency, his son desiring Mr. Partis, the attorney, to buy one and make him a present of it. He finally went to reside with his son on his estate in Berkshire; but his memory was beginning to fail him, and he was continually losing the small sum of money which he had taken with him, and which he declared was all he had in the world. It was about five pounds, and this he used to hide, and being unable to find it, declared that he had been robbed. At last, having become very feeble, and his memory quite gone, he died on the twenty-sixth of November 1788, leaving property to the amount of eight hundred thousand pounds. His two natural sons inherited half a million, and the remainder, consisting of entailed estates; descended to the heir-at-law.

This man was one of the strangest contradictions. He was of the highest honor and integrity, and his word alone was always considered sufficient security. Though consumed and his better nature distorted by the passion of avarice, such was his delicacy of feeling that he professed never to be able to ask a gentleman for money, and this rule he never violated. In consequence, several large sums which in his gambling days he won from persons of rank were never paid. His manners were always gentlemanly and even rudeness could not ruffle them, and on several occasions he was known to put himself to considerable trouble in order to do a service to persons from whom be could have had no hope of repayment. From all of which we may conclude that there was in him a natural kindness of heart; though choked by a rank growth of noxious weeds.

Of a totally different character was Thomas Cooke, who was a contemporary of Elwes, and who attained some little celebrity by his riches and shameless meanness. He was born at Clewer, near Windsor, in 1716. His father, an itinerant fiddler, died when he was an infant, and he was brought up by a grandmother at Swannington, near Norwich. As a boy he was employed at a factory in Norwich, afterwards becoming a porter to a drysalter. Through the interest of his master, he obtained an appointment in the Excise, and arrived in London with eight shillings in his pocket. His early habits of parsimony continued. He ingratiated himself with a brewer, and took some trouble to learn the business; and when this man died, he told the widow her only chance of carrying on the business was to marry himself, as he was better acquainted with it than any one else. To this she ultimately consented. He was now a rich man, but the richer he became, the more his avarice increased. He allowed scarcely any food in the house, nearly starved besides ill-treating his wife; and she, poor soul, who had been used to a very different life with her former husband, soon died of a broken heart. One of his favorite methods of obtaining his daily food was by timely visits to person he knew, throwing out hints of having just made his will, in which he had not forgotten them. Or he would be very particular in having the full names of the children written down, carefully bestowing the paper in his pocket-book. Another method was to fall down in the street in a simulated fit before a good house, into which he would be taken and kindly treated. He never failed to call the next day, profuse in his thanks for their kindness, representing that they had saved his life, for which some day they would receive a substantial reward. Thus, by empty promises made to all sorts of people, he was continually raising hopes for no other purpose than to trade on them to his own advantage. As the rich Mr. Cooke's friendship was worth cultivating, he was continually receiving presents of geese, turkeys, hares, and wines, from people to whom he had made these false promises. Notwithstanding his inordinate love of money, he was fond of amusement; he liked a good horse, and went once a year to Epsom races. These excursions, however, seldom cost him anything, for he always managed to fasten himself upon other people. At length, through infirmities of age, he found himself compelled to have

medical advice. His plan then was to dress himself in rags, and apply to some physician as a pauper or unfortunate tradesman, relying upon the doctor's kindness to obtain his advice. He did this many times, and once was so troublesome to a doctor, that the latter caused inquiries to be made about him and discovered who he was. Upon this he refused to see him again, and sent him his bill, which, however was never paid. Thus did this man, by the most paltry devices, delight in tricking every one with whom he was brought in contact. At length he became extremely weak, and spent the remaining portion of his life in arranging his affairs with his solicitor, altering and realtering his will many times. He died on the twenty-sixth of August 1811, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, unpitied, and unlamented, leaving nearly one hundred and thirty thousand pounds behind him. Of all the miserable and sordid men of whose life we have any record, his, surely, is the worst. Not one good action or one redeeming virtue can we place to his credit.

THE DESERTER.

A STORY OF WOMAN'S FOLLY.

IT was the last year of the civil war—a year full of anxiety, suspense and privation of every kind. Down here in Louisiana we were beginning to realize that our cause was hopeless, and that the Confederacy was near its end. I suppose it was that knowledge which made people so reckless. Men had lost all sense of responsibility in the whirl of events and acts were constantly committed which, in the light of a calmer day, seem the acts of madmen.

New Orleans, in possession of the Federals, had quieted down to a certain extent, but the country parishes were in a ferment, occupied as they were in turn by Confederate and Northern troops. The ravages of irresponsible, plundering bands had become so terrible in some of the Western parishes that, at the urgent request of Judge Maxwell, who was a distant relative of mine, I took refuge with him at Boscabel, a plantation in the Red River country.

This district, it is true, was occupied by Federal troops, but they were well disciplined and committed no outrages. After the terrors and uncertainties of the "debatable ground," there was a comfortable feeling of security in finding ourselves within the lines, and not in danger of capture. Several ladies, friends of Judge Maxwell, had collected at Boscable, so our social life was far from dull.

Beautiful Adela Maxwell was our host's young daughter-in-law. She had only been married a week when her husband, who had enlisted in General Taylor's army, was compelled to leave her.

She was a lovely, irresponsible child—a spoiled one, too. At sixteen years of age she had married Theo Maxwell, who was not then twenty. It was due to the recklessness so common at that period that the marriage of the young pair was sanctioned by the two families.

Theo was grave and thoughtful beyond his years; brave, as were all the Maxwells, almost stern in his ideas of duty, and only weak where his beautiful little bride was concerned.

Most Southern women were brave and high-spirited, ready to make any sacrifice for a cause they considered sacred, but Adela had not a grain of patriotism in her soul. She did not care a straw which cause conquered, so that the war might end and Theo return home. Her standing grievance was that he had joined the army as a private instead of marching forth in all the glory of a general's paraphernalia.

At times she would give way to a perfect passion of grief, and eat nothing for days. Then the mood would change, and she would be in the wildest spirits, laughing, singing, dancing. She reminded me of a butterfly I once saw lighting on the rim of a cannon the moment before it was discharged.

One morning she burst in upon us in the breakfast room in an irritable and impatient mood.

"I can't stand this!" she cried. "I

never closed my eyes all night thinking of Theo. I can't eat, I can't sleep, and I shall die if Theo doesn't come home! I must see with my own eyes that he is alive and well."

"But how can you expect him to come?" cried Dora Maxwell, the judge's daughter, a sensible, spirited girl, who had not too much patience with her sister-in-law's childish ways. "He's a soldier, a private, too, and they are not allowed a furlough every time their wives happen to cry for them. With all this skirmishing going on around us you surely don't think there is any chance of his getting off? I do wish, Adela, you would try to be reasonable—for Theo's sake, if for no other reason.

"Look at Mrs. Rogers," she continued. "Her husband is in constant peril, and see how brave and cheerful she is. She says that is the only way in which she can imitate him."

"Don't talk to me of Mrs. Rogers!" Adela looked like a small fury. "Do you pretend to compare my love for Theo with hers for her husband? Easy enough to be quiet when she doesn't care a picayune for him! Didn't she actually hurry him off last week, when he hadn't been with her for more than an hour? Don't compare us and set that cold-hearted thing up as my model!"

"I don't compare you," Dora said, dryly. "Mrs. Rogers is utterly unselfish, a noble woman, to whom the honor of her husband is as dear as her life. She hurried him off because she knew if he waited until daylight his risk of being made a prisoner would be great. Besides, he had promised his captain to be back that night, and he was in honor bound to keep his word."

Adela burst into a flood of angry tears.

"Honor! honor!" she repeated, petulantly. "I just hate the word! Honor made Theo join the army and leave me here to be wretched. Honor keeps him away! Some day honor is going to leave him on the battle field with a bullet in his heart. What will it do for me if I lose him, I'd like to know? Nobody here feels for me. Nobody loves Theo as I do!"

She hurried from the room, but stopped on the threshold and turned her pretty tear-stained face to us.

"Theo shall come back to me in spite of you all!" she cried.

Dora sighed deeply as the door closed behind Adela. "Poor Theo!" she said, softly. "He always seemed to feel such a contempt for women! Yet that girl can make him do anything!"

"She is such a child!" I interposed.

"Yes, and that makes her so unfit to be a wife. We are going to have an opportunity of sending letters through the line to-day, and heaven only knows what Adela will write to her husband. Enough to make him wretched, I dare say, for she won't spare him a single tear of hers. He'll fancy her pining to death, and before night, I dare say, she'll be laughing and singing."

But for once Dora was mistaken. Adela complained of a violent headache, and after writing her letter went to bed and did not make her appearance until late the next day. Then she wore a subdued, rather frightened look, not natural to her. She appeared like a mischievous child who had done something naughty, and was afraid of being found out.

For the two following days she was in a state of perpetual excitement almost hysterical. She would rush from door to window, or to any place which commanded a view of the long, front avenue. At any unexpected sound she would spring up, listen breathlessly, and then sink back in her seat with a sigh.

"I am afraid my little girl is getting nervous," said Judge Maxwell, on the second evening, putting his arm affectionately around her. "Come, it won't do when Theo returns for him to find a wife with her nerves unstrung. The women of our family were as brave as the men, and I can't have a Maxwell a coward."

"But I'm not an out and out Maxwell," she answered, with a hysterical laugh; "and I'm an awful coward. Oh, why don't Theo come home!"

This was followed by a violent burst of tears, and she wrung her hands as if in despair.

"Dora, you had better take your sister to her room and make her lie down," the judge said, gently. "Adela, my dear, you must try to control yourself. Remember that your tears will not bring your husband back one day sooner. You are only injuring your health, and for Theo's sake you must take care of that."

After they left the room the judge and I sat silent until the lamps were lighted. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, for we heard the hurried steps of a man on the long veranda in front of the house.

Then the door was violently thrown open

and Theo stood before us. Theo, pale, wild-eyed, and covered with dust. He looked in our faces, strangely, inquiringly, and uttered a deep groan. His parted lips strove to speak, but the words died in a gasp.

"My son! what is the matter?" cried the judge, taking his hand.

"Adela, my darling! Is she dead?" the son managed to articulate. "Am I too late?"

"Adela? Why, she is in perfect health—never has been ill. She was in the room five minutes ago."

The judge stopped suddenly, terrified by his son's looks. He had grown ghastly pale and sank into a chair.

He covered his face with his hands, shaking as if in an attack of ague. In a moment he controlled himself and tried to speak calmly. "Read that," he said, drawing a letter from his pocket and handing it to his father, "and tell me if I could have stayed away."

Months afterwards I read the letter. In it Adela told her husband she was dying, and he must come to her immediately if he would see her alive, but, ill as she was, no one could write to him but herself. If he loved her, come! The letter was written in faint, tremulous characters, as if the hand was too weak to hold the pen, and the eyes too dim to see the lines.

Judge Maxwell's face was very stern when he laid down the letter.

"It was an unjustifiable deceit," he said, "but you must try to forgive her. You must not let it embitter your visit."

"Father, do you not understand?" cried the young soldier. "I asked for permission to visit a dying wife, but the general positively refused. They expect a battle at Pleasant Hill, and not a man was allowed to leave. I came without permission."

"A deserter! You, Theo Maxwell!" cried the judge, looking stunned.

"Yes, a deserter on the eve of battle!" Theo cried, with a bitter laugh. "I've done for myself now, father."

There was a hurried step in the corridor, and in a moment Adela was in her husband's arms, crying and laughing hysterically.

"I heard your voice, darling," she cried. "Why hadn't I been called? Didn't I tell you all he should come back to me? And now I've got him! I've got him! I've got him!" her voice rising shrill and strained with excitement. "But what is the matter, Theo? Why do you look at me like that? What is the matter with you all?"

"The matter, madam," cried Judge Maxwell, sternly, "is disgrace to my son and your husband. By your falsehoods you brought him from his post—made him a deserter. Do you know what that means? It is disgraceful death! Yes, that is what you have brought upon the man you professed to love."

He got no farther, for Adela's head fell back on her husband's shoulder in merciful unconsciousness. He strained her to his bosom and pressed a kiss upon her white lips.

"Dora, take her to her room," he said. "Be gentle with her for my sake sister. She is only a child and did not know what she was doing. I must get away from here before she revives." He tightened his belt and pulled his cap over his eyes.

The old judge laid a trembling hand upon his son's arm.

"Theo, my son," he, said, tremulously, don't go back! There is a squadron of northern soldiers camped just back here in Miller's field. You can be taken prisoner by them, you know, and you'll be safe from, from"—

He stammered and choked.

"I understand you, father," Theo said quietly. "You mean if I am taken prisoner I will escape a deserter's fate. It will add cowardice to desertion. No, sir, I will get back the soonest I can, and bear my fate as your son should. I had to run a cordon of Federal troops coming here, and I fear it will be hard work getting back through the lines,"

"But General Taylor is my friend." The old man's speech was growing inarticulate. "I will write to him, I will write to him. I will go to him. He must listen to me. No court martial could condemn you under such circumstances."

Theo smiled sadly.

"I hope for little leniency. I left on the eve of battle, you must remember. Farewell, father! Be kind to my poor little wife, Dora, don't unman me." She was clinging to him and sobbing convulsively. "If you love me you will go back to Adela. Do not tell her what may happen to me. I leave her to you all as a sacred charge," he answered, solemnly, and before any one answered had gone.

"I will go myself," stammered the judge,

trying to rise from his seat. "I will explain to General Taylor. My boy shall not be sacrificed," a convulsion passed over his face, his feet refused to support him, and he sank back in his chair.

We knew well what was the matter. A year before he had had an attack of paralysis, a slight one, and his old enemy had him once more in its relentless grip. For three days and nights we watched beside him until the end came.

A week afterwards our cruel suspense as to Theo's fate was over. In trying to pass the Federal pickets he had been shot.

"Thank God!" sobbed Dora, "he was spared the ignominious fate of a deserter. I think he wanted to be killed."

Adela's grief at first was violent. She soon returned to her father's house. In a few months I saw her there as lovely, as irresponsible and as gay as if she had not caused the disgrace and death of the man who had loved her more than his duty.

Some hearts, like oaks, bend before the blasts of fate and do not break; others, like willows shed their leaves at every passing breeze. Which is best?

HOW EASY IT IS.

HOW easy it is to spoil a day!
The thoughtless words of cherished friends,
The selfish act of a child at play,
The strength of a will that will not bend,
The slight of a comrade, the scorn of a foe,
The smile that is full of bitter things—
They all can tarnish its golden glow,
And take the grace from its airy wings.

How easy it is to spoil a day
By the force of a thought we did not check!
Little by little we mould the clay,
And little flaws may the vessel wreck.
The careless waste of a white-winged hour
That held the blessing we long had sought,
The sudden loss of wealth or power—
And lo! the day is with ill inwrought.

How easy it is to spoil a life—
And many are spoiled ere well begun—
In some life darkened by sin and strife,
Or downward course of a cherished one;
By toil that robs the form of its grace,
And undermines till health gives way;
By the peevish temper, the frowning face,
The hopes that go and the cares that stay.

A day is to long to be spent in vain;
Some good should come as the hours go by—
Some tangled maze may be more plain,
Some lowered glance may be raised on high.
And life is to short to spoil like this;
If only a prelude it may be sweet;
Let us bind together in threads of bliss
And nourish the flowers around our feet.

THE CONSTABLE AND THE BEES.

By Corporal Trim.

THE first case to which my legal talents were ever called in the science of pettifogging, was an action of book-debt by a pretty close-fisted country storekeeper and notion dealer generally, against a lazy, but very clever fellow who went by the very lazy name of Aaron Squeers. Aaron might, on the one hand, have been abundantly able to pay the amount of the debt, which was only nine dollars and thirty-four cents, or, on the other hand, he might have been in just no way at all. However that may be, the account had been running along some six years, and the creditor's patience had not yet run clean out, at least he was determined to keep his claim this side of a prospect of growing outlaw.

So one fine summer afternoon I was startled by a sudden noise of substantial brogans in the entry and a thundering at my office door, and when I had recovered myself enough to cry "come in," I was duly informed by my visitor that I was looking on the person of no other man than Aaron Squeers. Aaron said he could not stop long enough to take off his hat—that for once in his life he was in something of a hurry.

"Are you busy, squire?" said he.

"I don't know that I am just now," said I—as if I ever had been busy with law cases outside of those I used to make the acquaintance of in the books.

"I've got sued, squire!" said he, stretching open his eyes as if he had just woke up from something.

"How's that, Aaron?" said I.

"Nat'ral enough!" she he, drolly.

"Can I do anything for you?" I ventured, with a modesty that never would make a lawyer's fortune, if long persisted in.

"That's tew the pint, squire!" said he; "I come to see you on that very subject now!"

"Well, who brings the action?" I inquired, "and for what cause does it lie?"

"Why, the fact is," said Aaron, "that Mr. Jones is here—old Jones—has sued me for a little bill he's somehow got agin me. I told him the old 'oman got things on him arter I told him not to let her have any more, but he said that made no difference; I was charged with them things at such a time, and the 'count had run long enough. So what does the old flint do but make out my bill and send it in ter me, as if that 'ud do any good."

"Have you got the bill with you?" said I.

"Yis—it's here, but I don't see how he's goin' to git the money off on't; it's out-lawed already, squire! Just look er that air date!"

True enough, the last charged had been made more than six years before.

"Well, I suggested, "why do you fret about this? Your debt clearly comes within the Statute of Limitations. Mr. Jones has sued you too near sunset to recover now, if you are not able and willing to pay."

"Lord bless yer soul, squire, I knew that! But somehow er other they've got a court over at the tavern, and I've come up to tend. I s'pose they're waitin' for me over thare neow; they told me I might have time to go out and hunt up counsil."

"The mischief you say! why didn't you say so in the first place?"

"Wal, I thort I should git to the nub o'nt by-'n-by. Will ye go over with me, squire, and tend to this?"

I scarcely needed the invitation. This was my first case, and under the circumstances, I thought I should make a pretty good impression on the gossippy little village by gaining it. The bar-room of the dirty old barrack of a tavern was full. All the great and little men of the quiet town were assembled; some in their shirt sleeves, some with their shirt sleeves rolled up, some barefooted, and some chafing their unwashed ankles against the rough edges of their brogans. Two or three good-sized dogs lay stretched across the floor, with their heads resting on their fore-paws, and altogether the steam that rose from the entire mass was a little beyond what one ordinarily snuffs up even in a court-room.

Justice Fuller persided with due dignity behind a little table drawn up before him—and sat tipped back in his chair, swinging his right leg first one side of the front chair leg, then the other. His decision evidently was fast forming within the volume of that active brain, and his little mole eyes, twinkled

with a very curious twinkle indeed, as my worthy client and myself entered the room.

Mr. Jones, too, was there, and I thought he looked the very picture of justice, apparently unconcerned whether he should lose his debt or not, so that justice was not defrauded. I thought he looked as if he meant to be thought by all her stern defender. Yet for the life of me I couldn't imagine how he was going to get over the outlawry of his claim.

The case was called with all form and solemnly by his honor, Justice Fuller, and the writ read in response. I plead "nil debuit"—owes nothing—to the action, and in defence urged the Statute of Limitations, under which the holder of a claim for more than six years' standing was debarred the right of recovery.

The plaintiff stretched his eyes wide open. His counsel demanded to see the date of the last charge in the bill. I read it to him. Just then the plantiff himself who had been hurriedly ransacking his day-book, which is the only reliable evidence of a debt or a credit in court, nudged his cousel's elbow, and handing him the book, pointed with his long, skinny finger to the last charge entered upon the book. I consulted the bill again, which he had drawn from that book, and found the date corresponding to that charge to be just one year earlier.

"It must have been a mistake in drawing off the account," he said.

"Yes—yes!" sounded up Justice Fuller's gruffest tones; "I shall go by the charges in the book—not by any copies, or any mistakes!"

I began to see which way the breeze had set in to blow, and cast a sly look round to my clever client to see how he bore it; but his hair lay just as ever, and he sat staring at the lazy flies that were crowding each other out of the sunshine on the old oaken floor.

"But may it please the court!" said I, in tones of blandness that I flattered myself would have well become an old practitioner, "many of these charges on this bill of the plaintiff, were made subsequent to my client's forbidding him to trust another cent's worth to his family; and"——

"Can't help that," said the court, snappishly, and running its fingers through its steeple-combed hair—"can't help that, sir! It's a weighty principle of law, sir, which if you haven't yet learned, you soon will if you appear before me often—that I make no sort o' distinction 'tween a man and his wife, and I don't think I shall undertake to to-day!"

'Twas of no use—the court's mind was made up. It would have been as well to have tried to make water run up hill as to make Justice Fuller show the first sign of leaning towards any rights my clever client might be supposed to possess.

"Besides," said he, "I've seen a disposition in this court to take advantage of a mistake made by the plaintiff in drawin' off his account, and such things are not allowed here, nor in no other court."

Justice Fuller looked perfect satisfaction after finishing this sentence. It was evident he had waited long to let it out, and at last he did. Explanations were useless, and the court rendered judgement in form against my clever client, Aaron Squeers. It was adjudged that he pay the debt, with costs of prosecution.

"I don't want to oppress a poor man—that is if he is poor," said Jones, rising, "and if Mr. Squeers will now pay me the amount of the bill, which is only nine dollars and thirty-four cents, I will agree to pay the costs myself."

A buzz went all through the court-room, and all looked at Aaron. Aaron only squirted a plentiful stream of tobacco juice on a little knot of flies in the sun, but made no signs of raising his head.

I turned and asked him how that offer suited him.

"Jest as live pay the hull, as enny on't!" said he, squirting again.

The justice inquired if the thing could be settled here now, if not he should allow execution to be taken out of court, and Squeer's property to be attached to the amount of both the bill and costs.

I remarked that he might as well let the plaintiff go to the end of the law.

"Well, Mr. Squeers," said the court, pompously, "I am sorry to have to put you to extra trouble in this affair"——

"'Tain't no great trouble to me," said Aaron.

"But," he continued, "I feel compelled to say a few words to you, before granting a writ of execution, on the subject of a man's paying his honest debts."

"Wall, go ahead then!" said Aaron; "this debt ain't an honest one, and of course I sha'n't come under your excellent remarks; I forbid Jones trusting my family another cent, last November; all that I owed

him afore then I'm willin' to talk about!" and he made for the door.

The court's remarks were abruptly drawn to a close. The writ of execution was drawn up in form and duly signed by the august Justice Fuller. I had waited to see the end. It commanded the constable to attach the property of one Aaron Squeers, being thirteen hives of bees then in the defendant's possession, and so much sell at the public post as would satisfy the within named debt, together with the cost thereon. I took my hat and started for my office, and found Aaron sitting there as composedly as if nothing had happened.

"Took possession, squire?" said Aaron.

"That's right," I replied.

"Wall, what they going to dew next?"

"Well, Aaron," said I, "they'll light on your bees; the bees were expressively specified in the execution."

"Bees! My bees!" he cried, as though he had just woke up, "they'are perfectly welcome to them critters! They've airnt me a livin' now these five year, and I guess they'll pay pretty much all my debts—at any rate the honest ones! But, squire, what's yeour fees, I sh'd like tew know?"

"Nothing, Mr. Squeers," said I, "I've done you no good that I know of."

"No matter for that! Here's a a five, ef that'll do you any good—take it, dew!" and my very clever client fairly thrust it on me.

The next day about noon, the constable, who was a young sprig in office, and of course greatly overrated his official importance, pertly stepped into the yard of Aaron, who himself was taking a "nooning" on the bed, and proceeded to remove beehive number one. He lifted it in his arms, still holding the writ in one hand, and had got half way to the gate. He felt a sudden sting on the ball of his right thumb, and down he dropped the whole establishment.

"Murder, murder! Aaron—Squeers! Oh, take 'em off! mur—der!" shouted the youthful official.

Aaron heard the cries and the buzzing, and springing from his bed said to his wife, "There, Lucinda! there's another hive a swarmin' as true as I live!"

Aaron ran to the door, and Lucinda after him. All he saw was young Gregge, the constable, showing the longitude of his feet on his way to the garden gate, and a black streak of infuriated bees after him.

Aaron's tin kettle was soon going, and little clouds of sand were flying from Lucinda's hand in amongst them. It wasn't long before Aaron had hived them all, and put them back in their old place under the apple trees. Greggs, seeing all safe, ventured back again. It wouldn't do for him to make so poor a show in serving his first writ, and he determined to brave it out, even if it cost him something. Aaron thought it might cost him something.

"Sqeeers," said Greggs, at the gate.

"That's my last name!" answered Aaron.

"I've come to attach them bees!" said Greggs.

"Wal, why don't you dew it, and not take 'em up and sprinkle 'em all round the yard so?"

"They stung me!"

"Sarved ye right," said Aaron, still working over the hive.

"But I must attach 'em," said Greggs.

"Wal, I don't hender, I tell ye! 'Tach 'em if ye want tew!"

"But how can I get 'em off o' your premises?"

"That is somethin' of a pint!" said Aaron.

"Wal?"

"Are you willing to help me?"

"Wal—I should want tew consider!"

"If I'll pay you?"

"Wal—I'll think on't."

"I'll tell you what I'll do!"

"Say on," said Aaron.

"Come here to the fence."

"No you come here!"

"But them blasted bees!"

"They won't tech ye!"

"I'd rather not."

Aaron laughed, but went slowly over to the fence.

"If you'll remove them bees off of your premises, Aaron," said Greggs, "I'll give you a five dollar bill."

"Pay in advance?" asked Aaron.

"Yes!"

"Wal, I'll dew it!"

Aaron took his five dollars from the officious little constable, and began with hive number one, as Greggs had begun before him. The bees didn't seem to dislike their owner quite as much as they did the little constable. Aaron carried the hive out of the gate and set it down in a protected place by the side of the highway. Then he took the second, and the third, and so on to the thirteenth.

"There they are," said Aaron.

"But I am no better off now!" exclaimed little Greggs, in alarm."

"I don't see as you are, nuther!" said Greggs.

"Yeou said—remove 'em off o' my premises, that's the highway!"

"I know—but I expected you to carry them to my yard!"

"Why didn't you say so then? I shall have to tax you extra for that job."

"But Squeers, I have paid you five dollars already!"

"I know it; but I should think you ought to know it's a resky business!"

"Well carry them over to my yard, and I'll give you two dollars more!"

"Pay in advance agin?" said Aaron.

"No—I'll pay when you get 'em over there."

In a little while the thirteen hives, with their swarms within, stood in a neat row under the orchard wall of Mr. Anson Greggs, constable of the little town of C——. Squeers pocketed his two dollars extra, and traveled home. He missed his bees wonderfully, but he thought he should save them in some way or another. There was not another person in town that kept a single swarm, and no one knew how to manage their curious antics at such times as they saw fit to play them.

After due notice had been given, the day came when the thirteen hives of bees that had been attached to liquidate the claim of Mr. Jones, the storekeeper, against Aaron Jones, gentleman at large, were to be offered for sale at the public posts. The old drum was got out of the garret, on the head of which the warning of a sheriff's sale was accustomed to be given, and the people began to congregate on learning of so startling an event being about to occur. Constable Greggs might be seen at this very moment in the house of Aaron, anxiously waiting to have that very clever soul make some sort of response to his proposition.

"I don't think I kin dew it!" at last issued from his mouth.

"But Squeers, you must—you must! It'll never do! It'll ruin me, as sure as I am alive! Come, say you will now!"

"I'll tell ye what I will dew."

"What is it, Squeers?" anxiously inquired Greggs.

"It's humiliatin' enuf, enny body ought to know, for a man to have to cart off his own traps to be put up at a sheriff's sale; but as I've carried them bees a considdable for you already, and got kinder yews to it, I'll agree to carry 'em over agin, to the sign post, if you'll settle the bill with old Jones, and give me a five to boot!"

"But that's too much, Squeers!"

"I dunno but you think so, but it's all I can think ov that'll save your reppetation as an officer; I'll do that, neow, or jest nothin' at all!"

"Not a stiver less?" inquired Greggs.

"Don't see heow I kin, possibly!"

"Then I suppose I've got to."

"I s'pose so, without you'd ruther carry them yourself!"

"Well, Aaron, here's your five dollars! I'll settle the bill with Jones, somehow or other; bring along your bees!"

"My bees, I guess!" said Aaron to himself.

The crowd started to see Aaron carrying the hives to the post, but as they were an article of sale none cared to examine previous to purchasing, they suffered them to stand on the benches that had been placed there for them, unmolested. At last they were all there.

"Gentlemen," said the little constable with an air of importance, which Aaron thought very different from what he showed only a short time before at his house—"gentlemen, this sale will now begin! Here is this hive of bees!" pointing to hive number one; what am I offered for it?"

People who might have been disposed to buy, began to looked frightened at the thought of how they should get them home, if they did purchase. So nobody made a bid.

"I'll go five dollars on that hive," quietly remarked Aaron.

The officer looked all colors.

"Five dollars I am only offered!" cried Greggs; "five dollars! five dollars!"

"Six!" said old Jones, not willing to see the bees go back into Squeer's possession again.

"Seven!" said Aaron, just lifting his eyes off the ground.

People stared. They didn't understand this business. Justice Fuller was at old Jones's elbow in a moment, but both of them didn't seem to help the matter along much.

"Seven dollars! seven dollars!" cried Greggs, as a few straggling little honey-makers began to sing about his head, he cried out "gone! to Mr. Squeers!"

"How much am I offered for this hive?" said Greggs, pointing to another, "how much, how much?"

"I'll give another five, to begin on," said Aaron, sarcastically.

"Can't dwell!" said Greggs, as the bees seemed beginning to make his more intimate acquaintance, "gone to Squee"— but before he could finish he jumped off his box as if he had been suddenly called away from his duty. "Gentlemen!" said Greggs, when he had reached a respectable distance from the hives, "the sale of those two hives covers the entire legal claims on the property of Mr. Squeers, and the sale is finshed." Greggs then walked up to Aaron and asked for twelve dollars' pay for the hives he had sold him. Aaron handed over to him two fives and a two dollar bill—the identical money Greggs had paid him for his trouble in removing the bees from beginning to end. As he paid him he gave a good squirt of tobacco juice from his mouth, and remarked that he was glad enough to "git his bees back again."

Squeers carried the hives all back home again. He and Lucinda laughed heartily over the whole affair; and Greggs as he daily passes Aaron's house, is very particular to show him a little extra attention. But at the very next town meeting he declined being run as constable, as he hadn't time to attend to those things! Doubtless the experience which only cost him twelve dollars, was worth all of a hundred to him in frightening him from a desire for office. He had enough. Aaron bought more hives, and to this day it is said of him, that he is so lazy a man that he gets the bees to work for him!

MY WIFE'S MAID.

By John H. Bryan.

THE series of burglaries which startled the public in the autumn and early winter of the year 188— were of a description to alarm any household. The general features of each robbery were the same. In every case a gang of from seven to eleven masked men had broken into an isolated dwelling containing an unusual amount of silver and jewels, had intimidated the inmates by threatening them with firearms, mastered them, secured them, gagged them, then proceeded methodically to strip the house of all the valuables it contained. Their knowledge of the premises was never at fault. Secret drawers and sliding panels, supposed to be known only to the family, were sought and opened at once, and safes, whether built into the walls or placed in closets, were equally at their mercy, and easily forced by means of drills and gunpowder.

The police seemed indefatigable in their investigations and pursuit, yet five of these audacious and astounding robberies had succeeded each other without a single arrest taking place. Plenty of rumors were abroad that the gang were in the hands of the authorities, but such statements contained not a grain of truth, for the detectives were absolutely in the dark.

My own position filled me with anxiety. My house was six miles from town, set in the centre of wide grounds, remote from any habitation but the gardener's cottage at the gate. Both my wife and myself had inherited a large amount of bulky family plate, and besides this useless metal, which never came out of the safe, I had several costly services presented on the occasion of our marriage, three large salvers, etc, testimonials from societies in which I had been an active member, to say nothing of a complete and varied assortment of small articles in silver and gold. Besides plate and jewles, our house contained a valuable collection of statuary, paintings, and bronzes, and I was only too conscious of having expended a fortune upon the surroundings of our daily life, and inspired by grave doubts as to its safety. Brooding over such thoughts, and reading the newspapers filled with speculations concerning these mysterious burglaries, I soon became the victim of an exagerated disquietude. Had my own wishes been carried out, every ounce of silver and every jewel we owned would have been sent into

town to my banker, but my wife objected, laughed at my apprehensions, and begged me not to worry.

But I continued to worry, and perplexed myself with conflicting plans for safety, and one day while in town I went to the head-quarters of the police, and inquired for Betts, the detective engaged on the case.

He admitted me into his private room. I asked for the latest news. Had anybody been arrested? No. Was anybody to be arrested? He shrugged his shoulders. Was anybody suspected?

He chuckled softly to himself.

"My dear sir," said he, "we suspect everybody."

"Then," cried I, "arrest everybody on suspicion! Good God! I cannot sleep in my bed, for something assures me my turn will come next. This very night I may be awakened to find masked men standing over me with loaded pistols, who will rob my house under my very eyes."

Betts shook his head, mused a little with his legs crossed and his left forefinger pressed into his cheek. "By the by," said he, presently, "how many servants have you, Mr. Powers? Please tell me about them individually."

I went over their names, and the detective checked them off in his memorandum book as I gave the facts connected with them. Saunders, the butler, had been with us seventeen years, the cook five years; coachmen and groom seven, and the chamber-maid three—all fixtures in the household but Marie, my wife's maid, who had come within the last four weeks."

"Ah!" exclaimed Betts, "where did you get Marie? Was she well recommended?"

"Oh, yes, she is French, and has just come to this country with a family by the name of De Sturges. She was nurse to a child who died on the passage, and was thus thrown out of employment; she advertised, and my wife saw her, liked her, and engaged her."

"Did you see her former employers?"

"Yes; both De Sturges and his wife—chatty, agreeable people, of some means apparently, who are going to settle in London."

"Describe her, if you please," said Betts, with a keen interest which surprised me.

"With all my heart. Marie is small, black-eyed, black-haired, compactly built, with remarkable neat hands and feet. She has a saucy laughing face, and her hair is short, crisp, and curly. Her voice is very clear and ringing. She does not speak English fluently, but understands every word that is said to her."

"How about her little ways?" inquired Betts.

"A thorough Frenchwoman, with a knack of pleasing everybody. I don't know when I've seen such an artless, good, happy little girl."

Betts laughed uneasily, then bent his head on his hand, his elbow resting on his knee.

"Mr. Powers," said he at last, looking up with a peculiar flash in his eyes, "I am going to take you into my confidence, but you must be discreet, or you will ruin me. I've sworn to see this thing through, or resign my position. I've been working in the dark these nine weeks, but, by heavens, I believe you have shown me a glimmer of light."

Then, producing a note-book he opened it at well-worn leaves.

"There have been," he began, looking at me with a sort of smile, "five great robberies within the last six months, and each one has these special features, characterising it as the work of the same hand as the other four.

Firstly, the combination of seven or eleven masked men, all adroit burglars, secondly, an isolated house is attacked, sure to contain ample provisions for a successful robbery, thirdly, the thieves know the premises, fourthly, the leader of the gang is a small man, of active habits, and with a clear shrill voice."

He stopped and looked at me.

"I did not know there was a recognized leader," I remarked.

"He drew a large book from his desk. "Here," said he, "is the full testimony in all five cases. Run your eye over it, and you will see that the general facts coincide. The small man gives directions and leads everybody."

"Probably some London cracksmen."

Betts nodded, winked, then leaned forward and whispered in my ear, "I suspect it's a woman."

"Impossible! no woman has the nerve."

"A she devil, there—something in a woman's form at all events. Now for the facts on which I base this belief. The rest of the gang are as free and easy with each other as you please, yet no one lays a finger

on this little one, but all draw back to let him pass. He gives orders, exerts himself where ingenuity is required, but when strength is needed he looks on while the others fall to work."

"Still a very airy hypothesis this about the woman."

"You have to jump at conclusions sometimes, and find facts to suit. As soon as I had mastered these details, I was impressed by the conviction that one of the thieves had been on the premises before. At Mr. Stewarts, for instance, the safe is built into the wall, and a false panel in the wainscoat is the only opening to it, yet the first place the burglars approached was that panel, which the little fellow slid aside at once. So I set to work looking for a suspicious character in the house and found all satisfactory till I came to a French governess who stayed with them six weeks last spring. Now, sir, in each house entered by these masked men there has been during the past twelve months some similar transient inmate. At Wardwell's it was a French cook in white cap and apron; at the Dewis's, the young lady's page, a clever Buttons; at the Pratt's, a *protege* of the children, a handsome vagrant Italian boy, with a violin. And now, Mr. Powers," continued Betts, bringing his hand down heavily on his knee, "I am ready to swear that you have this dangerous inmate under your own roof in the character of your wife's maid."

"Impossible!" I gasped, "impossible! The idea is monstrous. Marie is a sweet little girl, playful as a kitten."

"Marie is a clever little puss. Wherever she has lived, as man or woman, the whole family have adored her. Has she shown an interest in these burglaries?" inquired Betts.

There could be no doubt of her having questioned me concerning them with intense eagerness, and if I spoke to my wife about my apprehensions while she was present, Marie never lost a word.

"Does she know about your silver? Has she charge of your wife's diamonds?"

I started. That very morning I had shown her my safes behind a false book-case in my study, and asked her opinion whether any one could mistrust those innocent-looking encyclopedias, or suspect the existence of a closet six feet square between my room and the library. I was ashamed of my own greenness, but made a clean breast of it to Betts, who was good enough to refrain from an expression of his opinion of my discretion.

"My word for it," he cried, "she has been waiting to find out that secret, and now she will leave your house within forty-eight hours. Her pretext will be a reasonable one, and she will promise to return, but when she does return she will bring a gang at her heels to rob your house for you."

The idea of connecting our pretty Marie with such outrages filled me with horror. I rejected it strenuously.

"Believe or not as you like," he returned, with a shrug, "so long as you follow my advice. Just out of curiosity, take home a little dog with you, and see if Marie does not set to work to bewitch it at once. Then the moment she speaks of leaving your house telegraph to me."

Our interview lasted another hour. When I left him I went to a dog fancier's and bought a little yelping black-and-tan spaniel, and carried him home with me.

It was approaching dinner time when I arrived, and my wife was in her room sitting before the mirror with Marie braiding her hair.

"Whom did you see in town?" inquired my wife.

"Don't speak of it," said I, looking fearfully about as if the walls had ears, "but I was with Betts, the detective. You must not repeat what I say, Marie."

"Never, monsieur!" cried Marie.

"The fact is," I proceeded, sinking my voice to a sepulchral whisper, "that gang of masked burglars have been traced to Liverpool, and may be arrested by this time."

"Then I hope, dear," said my wife, laughing, "that you will again sleep soundly in your bed."

I, too, laughed and stretched my legs comfortably. "Yes, I mean to sleep like a christain hereafter, besides, I have brought home a dog."

"A dog!" exclaimed Marie, startled.

"Yes." I turned and looked at her attentively. "Don't you like dogs?"

She protested vehemently that she loved them better than anything in the world, and when Jingle, the spaniel, was produced it was so pretty a sight to see her playing with him, that I was freshly incensed with Betts for putting his cursed suspicions into my head. She took the little beast to bed with

her, I believe, and next morning he would obey her lifted finger.

That very day she received a letter from Madame De Sturges, her former mistress, asking her to come in and pass a few hours with her before she left for the South. Marie carried the letter to Mrs. Powers. "Madame wishes to talk to me about Mdlle. Helene," pleaded the girl, with tears in her eyes. "To-morrow will be the birthday of the *pauvre ange*, who lies at the bottom of the cruel sea."

"Poor Madame De Sturges," exclaimed my wife, touched at the thought of the sorrowing mother, "you must spend to-morrow with her, Marie. Go in at nine and come back at five."

Marie was grateful and went into town the next morning to spend the day with Madame De Sturges.

Meanwhile I had telegraphed Marie's proposed movements to Betts, and now, with some nervousness, awaited events. The detective had warned me that she would win the dog's affections; that she would leave the house promising to return, but would not do so. Two of these predictions were already verified, but if Marie came back I could laugh at his suspicions, and regard them as futile.

But Marie did not return at five o'clock; a telegram arrived in her stead from Madame De Sturges, saying that she had kept the girl, and would write at length and explain. Next morning a letter was received from the lady.

While my wife read this to me with tears, I stood aghast.

I instantly telegraphed to Betts that I would meet him at my-son-in-law's office at twelve o'clock, then proposed to my wife that she should go to town and spend a couple of days with our daughter, and offered to drive her in myself. We set off within an hour, and after leaving her I hurried away to see the detective.

It was on the stroke of twelve when I entered the office, and I thought at first that Betts had failed me, for there was no one there but a ponderous old gentleman with gold glasses and white side-whiskers. I am not used to intrigues and masquerades, and when I recognized Betts in this disguise I could hardly refrain from exclaiming at his cleverness; but his own coolness kept me within bounds, and I sat down beside him and began reading a paper. Presently with his eyes still fastened on his *Times*, he edged toward me and dropped these sentences into my ear:—

"It's all going beautifully. I followed the girl in yesterday. Went to —— hotel. The De Sturges' booked there all straight. Whole party left London at nine o'clock last night, ticketed and luggage checked to Brighton. Got out of the train at Croydon, all three in men's dress, and were back in town before midnight. Met eight fellows I know at a tavern in —— street, and I can spot all eleven of 'em this very minute. They're at a den in —— street, getting ready to play their little game somewhere to-night."

"At my house?" I cried. "Look here, Betts," I continued, "this may be fun for you, but though I am no coward, it's death to me. Why not arrest them now?"

"Yes, just so," he returned, irritably, "why not? Where's your evidence? I am anxious to make a sure thing of it for once, and take my oath that I caught them in the act."

Betts went on to tell me that he had dispatched one of his men, Johnson by name, to my place to make a reconnoissance, under pretence of trimming my evergreens. Upon this man's report, and upon two or three other open questions which he did not think it worth while to explain, depended his programme for to-night.

If by any possibility there was a likelihood of my house being entered at once, I was to know it by dinner time that I might be prepared for the burglars. I was meantime to go home quietly, and spend my time in my usual manner, so as to excite no comment among the servants, and receiving no word from Betts I was to rest satisfied, and consider my house safe for another twenty-four hours.

I went home according to directions, but the house was so still and seemed so deserted, I found it impossible to read, or even to sit quietly in a chair, for more than five minutes at a time. So I called the little dog, Jingle, and set out for a walk about the grounds, feeling some anxiety to get a glimpse of the detective Johnson. I heard the sound of an axe through the sombre stillness, and Jingle frisked forward and barked at a man hacking at the firs in the shrubbery. I addressed him regarding his work, and he winked back his appreciation of our mutual sharpness, then I went on,

reconnoitred a few minutes longer and again turned in. The day seemed endless, and I was glad when Saunders lit the gas, and shut out the shivering landscape and the funeral clouds with the heavy curtains. Dinner time came, and brought with it a semblance of occupation, and when I was half through my meal I suddenly remembered Jingle and sent for him to keep me company. He was not in the house. It flashed upon me that I had not seen him after passing Johnson in the thicket, and I despatched the coachman to call him in; but only the echoes answered the cry. He had evidently remained out in the grounds with the policeman, and I dismissed the subject from my mind, finished my dessert, and went back to my library fire. No word had come from Betts, hence I was safe for the night, at all events, and I breathed freer and stretched my legs and dozed till ten o'clock in comparative comfort. Then, rousing myself, I lit a lantern and went out of the door and along the balcony to speak a word with Johnson, who, Betts had arranged, was in any case to keep a watch under the covered carriage-way.

He was not there. Perhaps, however, he was still loitering at the edge of the grounds; accordingly I walked out on the lawn, and swung my lantern two or three times. Then as it was bitterly cold and was beginning to snow, I turned in, and finding that it was almost eleven o'clock, ordered Saunders to close the house and send the servants to bed, and to bed I went myself.

But as soon as the light was out and my head touched the pillow I was freshly impressed by the mystery of Johnson's disappearance, and accordingly got up, opened my pistol case, took out two revolvers, and putting them and a sword-cane within easy reach I returned to bed.

After tossing a few times and assuring myself that I could not close my eyes I fell asleep—at least after a time I was awakened by a bright light shining full in my face.

"Good God!" I cried aloud, "they've come to-night." For three men with black cambric masks concealing their faces stood over me, each pointing a pistol at my head.

"Please to get up, Mr. Powers," said one of them in a cool, civil way, "please put on that dressing-gown and those slippers. You shall not be harmed in the least if you will only be quiet and obey directions."

With three pistols pointed at him any man will be docile, I suppose; at least I got up and put on my dressing-gown and slippers. Then one of the men caught my arms, drew them behind and manacled them, another gagged me with one of my own silk handkerchiefs, and thus rendered harmless, I was led down-stairs, where my household, in various stages of night attire, gagged, and tied back to back, were awaiting me in the dining-room. I was put into an arm-chair, and fastened to it by feet and hands, then was left alone to stare about me. I was maddened when I discovered that the sixth of the prisoners was Johnson the detective. I recognized him with a keen sense of the ridiculous, and only wished that Betts—whom I was mentally anethematising with curses not loud, but deep—was in his place, and tasting some of our humiliation.

Besides the three masked men who had mastered me and brought me down, there were five others in the dining-room. Two were left as senteniels over us, and the rest at once fell to work in a way that meant business. A small, active man (was it our Marie?) motioned toward the sideboard. It was wheeled aside, and stepping forward, he pressed the sliding panel, and disclosed the closet where the silver in daily use is kept, and the shelves were at once stripped, and the contents piled on the table.

The bed-rooms up-stairs were next visited, locks of drawers and wardrobes wrenched apart, and the contents thrown pell-mell on floor for the chief experts to decide on what should be carried off. The upper rooms gutted, they came down with their spoils, which they piled high before our eyes on the table, and then leaving us alone again with our sentinels, they went through the door into my library.

It was a dark hour. I leaned back my head and closed my eyes and felt that fate was blue to me. Only one consolation illumined the blackness of my despair—my wife had carried her jewels to town with her, and I was spared the humiliation of telling her that I had lost them for her through my idiotic faith in Betts. There was a long silence now which I understood but too well, it was followed by two muffled explosions that shook the house like an earthquake, and almost simultaneously was heard the noise of a scuffle, and I opened my eyes to see the room filled with policemen, and hear pistol-shots exchanged, while our two sen

tinels were thrown down and pinioned before my eyes.

In less time than it takes to describe it, the situation had been reversed, and now Betts, the detective, appeared in the door at the head of his posse of men, who had brought in eight of the captured burglars, two of them wounded and bleeding profusely, while the rest showed signs of having maintained a stout resistence; all had lost their masks in the *melee*, and disclosed sullen and brutal visages.

"How are you, Mr. Powers?" inquired Betts, coming forward and releasing me, "I hope you are not hurt. I beg your pardon for taking possession of your house in this way."

"Why did you make me think I was safe for to-night, Betts?"

"Because," he replied with a shrug, "I discovered you were just a little upset at the prospect, and I felt afraid of you." Meanwhile I was peering into the faces of the thieves, fearing to find Marie among them.

"Betts," I gasped suddenly, "you have not got the little one." He gave a cry, and glared from one to the other of the prisoners.

"You are sure there was another?"

"No doubt of it," I returned, "any one of those fellows is four inches taller than the leader of the gang."

In another moment he had set picked men at work searching both house and grounds; but he never succeeded in finding even a trace of the eleventh of the party of burglars. Not even after the conviction and heavy sentence of the other ten would any of them confess the secret of their leadership. I had easily identified Monsieur and Madame De Sturges—both swarthy and robust Frenchmen—among them, but in spite of all my efforts, neither one could be induced even to acknowledge they had ever heard of such a person as Marie, or that they had ever masqueraded under the respectable disguise of her employers.

But when the snow melted off in the spring, one little silent witness came to light and told his pitiful story against her, it was the dog Jingle, found dead in the shrubbery, his throat cut, and his frozen eyes still upturned in reproachful agony.

DREAM-FANCIES.

WHENCE are ye that come to us
In the stilly night?
Wherefore do you torture thus,
Phantoms of delight?
Say, if ye are only fancies,
Why your presence so entrances—
So deceives our sight?

Where, oh, where's your stronghold, tell,
In what fairy land?
O'er what meads of Asphodel
Sport your elfin band?
Tell me truly, flitting fancies,
Where you hold those fairy dances,
On what sunny strand?

When you, with you subtle spell,
Hold our senses fast,
Absent comrades with us dwell,
Present seems the Past:
Say, if ye are idle fancies,
Why, when overpast the trance is,
Its impression last?

Wherefore bring before us still
Those from whom we sever?
Mean you, that you tyrants will
Grant oblivion never?
Say, if ye are dreams and fances,
Why in dreams young Cupid's lances
Strike as deep as ever?

Tell me who your power confers,
Say from whom ye borrow
All your magic—harbingers
Ushering joy or sorrow;
Why, if ye're but fickle fancies,
These dream-faces, these dream-glances
Haunt us so to-morrow?

Mortal mind may never know,
Mortal wisdom cite
Whence ye come or whither go,
Spirits of the night:
Yet your mystery enhances,
And your witchery entrances
More than pen may write.

TWO WIVES.

By Mrs. E. E. Brown.

HIRAM ARMSTRONG'S wife was dead. It made little difference to the neighbors, to be sure, whether she lived or died; and yet on that bright spring morning, when the old church bell sent out through the village of Bridgeton the solemn tidings that some time during the night a soul had winged its way from earth, many a workman hurrying along to his daily toil, and many a housewife busy in preparing the morning meal, paused to count the strokes; and when they ceased at twenty-eight, said with a sigh of relief, "Hiram Armstrong's wife has gone, thank God!"

And yet, she was no brawling vixen whose noisy tongue had disturbed the peace of the neighborhood—no meddlesome busybody, sowing broadcast the seeds of slander and discord—but a mild and gentle woman, fair to look upon, meek and yielding in character, one who kept her house in order, and held the honor of her lord and master above all price.

Such was Hiram Armstrong's wife; but when the neighbors said, "She has gone, thank God!" they were not thinking of that; they were thinking how, ten years ago, she had come among them a modest bride, fair as the lilies that were just then bursting into bloom, and merry as the birds who sang their sweet songs, and made their airy homes amid the choice shrubbery and grand old trees that embowered Hiram Armstrong's stately mansion.

This same mansion with its broad terraces and gardens, its acre upon acre of woodland and meadow, had come to him from a prudent and careful father; and as no incumbrance in the shape of a widowed mother or dependent sister came with it, the young man had nothing to do but select a mistress for his beautiful home; and this he set about at once.

There were many young ladies, comely and of good repute, in the town of Bridgeton, but none of them seemed anxious to become "Mrs. Armstrong." He had too often expressed in their hearing the opinion that no woman was fit for a wife who was not willing to renounce the pomp and vanity of the world, and to conform entirely to the will and judgement of her husband.

Perhaps there were a few women in town who would have done this for the sake of the handsome home and vast estate, but those few Hiram Armstrong with his decided taste for youth and beauty would not accept. So he went out of town to select a wife; and so successful was he, that scarcely six months had elapsed after he came into the possession of his property, before he brought home one who was, in name at least, to be the mistress of "Elmwood," the name which he had given the old homestead.

It was Saturday night when the newly married pair arrived at Bridgeton, and the next day the church of which the bridegroom was a strong pillar was well filled.

The new spring suits had been christened a week or two before, so to Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong alone belonged the credit of drawing so full a house. But it was not the young people alone who stared at the bride till her fair face turned crimson beneath the snowy veil; the old gray-haired men feasted their eyes upon her beauty, and went home declaring that "she was pretty as a pink, and it was a pity she had been so taken in.

Hiram Armstrong did not look at it in that light. In bringing home to his stately, well-furnished house, a homeless, penniless orphan, who had just left school for the purpose of earning her own living, he thought he had done a deed worthy of commendation. And when he had borne her away from the snares and temptations of this wicked world, and taken upon himself the task of forming her young mind after a model of his own, and of teaching the young thing, who was only a child in worldly wisdom, to humble the flesh that the spirit might grow strong, he felt that he had snatched a brand from the burning.

The next day after the bride had made her *début* in the village church, she was honored with callers, Three young ladies, belles of the village, girls who, while they enjoyed life as they found it, and entered with spirit and animation into all sorts of innocent merry-making, would scorn to do a mean or unworth act, had decided among themselves that it was too bad for the young stranger, no older than they were, to be shut up in that gloomy old house, with no

companion except the disagreeable old housekeeper, who was enough to frighten a nervous person into hysterics; so, as they knew that Mr. Armstrong was away, they ventured to call and introduce themselves. In answer to their inquiries, the old housekeeper pursed up her thin lips, and informed them that Mrs. Armstrong was at home, but that no doubt she had rather not receive callers so soon after entering upon her new duties. The young ladies had expected opposition from the grim warden of the castle, and were not to be defeated; so after assuring the unsocial lady that they should wait until she had announced them, they were shown into the sitting-room.

It was a pleasant room, well filled with costly furniture and ornaments, but everything appeared so stiff and precise, that the restless visitors longed to stir things up a little, and make the room look as though people lived in it. While they were expressing this laudable desire, the door opened to admit their hostess. Her slight form and fair face were child-like in outline and beauty, and her sunny curls hung loosely about her shoulders, justifying the opinion that the visitors afterward expressed, that she looked like a "real fairy."

The conversation was somewhat formal and constrained at first, but this constraint soon wore away, and before the ladies left they had learned that Mrs. Armstrong was only eighteen, just from boarding-school, but expecting to be at once introduced into the best and gayest society of Bridgeton. This they learned from her; but they found out by intuition, as it were, that she had been dependent upon distant relatives, who, in order to get her off their hands, had persuaded her into a marriage with Hiram Armstrong, and that not being accustomed to attentions from the sterner sex, she had thought herself strangely favored in being chosen for a wife by one so rich and wise as he. And so, full of hope and happiness, she had exchanged a life of poverty and dependence, to become, as she thought, the petted and cherished wife of one who, though somewhat reticent, was at heart all that was noble and generous.

This was the creature of which the rigid disciplinarian, the bigoted, self-conceited Hiram Armstrong, was to form his model wife. He commenced his training at once. For the first time since leaving her old home, Mrs. Armstrong was enjoying the society of young people, girls whose hearts were as light as her own, and who had not been taught that innocent mirth and happiness were sinful in the sight of the Creator.

The sound of happy voices were ringing through the lofty rooms, calling a frown to the face of Mrs. Grump, the housekeeper, when Mr. Armstrong entered the hall. For a moment he was undecided what to do. He could not have such thoughtless levity in his house. Those giddy girls might as well understand at once that he did not consider them fit companions for his wife, and that their visits were neither to be desired nor tolerated. So with a stern face and a manner that struck a chill to each of the four, he went into the sitting-room. With the slightest and stiffest of bows, he barely acknowledged the presence of visitors; then taking up a volume of printed sermons, sat down to peruse them, plainly showing that he desired the unwelcome callers to take their departure.

This they were not slow to do, declaring when they reached the freedom of the outer world, that Hiram Armstrong was a tyrant, and that they had rather be killed outright like Bluebeard's wives, as that beautiful victim whom they had left behind was sure to be.

After they had gone Mr. Armstrong laid down his book and walked up and down the room, hardly knowing what to say first; but his young wife broke the silence by saying:—

"Those young ladies said they were acquainted with you; but you didn't seem glad to see them. Don't you like them?"

"Annie," replied he solemnly, "you know nothing at all about the people of this village, while I have lived here all my days. I consider myself better qualified to select your associates, than you are to choose them for yourself."

"But I did not choose them exactly; they came to see me of their own accord, and I like them very much. Why are they not fit associates for me?"

"My dear, you are a married woman now, and the wife of one who is called a pillar of the church. As such it becomes you to choose your friends among those of like standing. The girls who have just called on you—for the last time, I trust—are giddy, frivolous things, whose minds are wholly engrossed by the vanities of this world, and I do not wish my wife to be subjected to their influence."

"But I am sure I saw them all in church."

"No doubt; they go to church merely to pass away time; they have no interest at all in religious things. I presume they will be in some dance-hall before the week is out."

"I have promised to return their call soon."

"A bad promise is better broken than kept. Now that you know my wishes, I trust that you will not cultivate their acquaintance. I will introduce you to any people whose friendship I wish you to seek. To commence with, Elder Barnes and his wife, and Miss Pamilia Stetson, an active laborer in the vinyard of the Lord, are to call on us this evening. To-morrow evening the weekly prayer-meeting is to be held, and on Wednesday evening we are invited to meet with others at the parsonage, to devise some means of aiding the foreign missionaries in their labors. So you see you will hardly have time to be lonely. Do you not see, my dear, the sun is shining directly in upon the carpet? I will close the blind, and you can open it a little while in the morning, before the sun gets round here. My sainted mother never allowed the sun to fade her carpets."

Hiram Armstrong closed the blind, and went out into the kitchen to give orders concerning tea; and the timid, disappointed bride of only a week stole up to her room, and indulged in a fit of bitter weeping.

So Hiram Armstrong's training was commenced; and, aided by the passionless, solemn-visaged housekeeper, it was persistently carried on. If Mrs. Armstrong had been one of your strong-minded, self-willed women, it would have been different; but as it was, she drooped like a warm southern plant amid the cold snows of a New England winter. Her husband never scolded that was beneath his dignity; but he had a peculiar way of making his meek, dispirited wife feel that his will was her law. A laugh was seldom heard in their house; no visitors were encourage except such as the master chose to entertain; and only to such places as suited his own tastes did he ever take his wife.

The poor woman's passion for cultivating house-plants was condemned, because plants would not flourish without sunlight, and the sun was sure to fade the carpets and furniture. Pocket-money she was not supposed to need. If at any time she hinted a wish for a few dollars, her husband was sure to inquire, very kindly, what she wished to purchase; and on being informed, instead of giving her the means, and allowing her to suit herself in the selection, he would make it his business to purchase the articles for her.

Still, Hiram Armstrong never meant to be unkind to his wife; and if any one had told him that she was not happy, he would have thought that either his informer was mistaken or that his wife was very unreasonable. When he brought her to his handsome, well-furnished house, and saw that a competent housekeeper, the very one who had served in his mother's day, was ready to take full charge of affairs, he considered that he had done all that was needed for her comfort; and in choosing for her such friends and amusements as his own dogmatical nature would allow, he thought that he had done all that was necessary for her happiness. All things else that she desired were whims which for the good of her own soul must be crushed rather than encouraged.

But a ray of sunlight did creep into the solemn old house; it came with their babe, a sweet little-blue eyed darling whom the fond mother, who had not outgrown all her girlish fancies, desired to call May; but in this, as in all else, the stronger will ruled the weaker, and the child was christened Hannah.

Hiram Armstrong spent many hours in picturing to himself the model child who was to obey his slightest wish in the years to come; and in fancy he trained her young mind and formed her ideas until she rivaled in piety and precocity the brightest subject of the memories under which the shelves of the sabbath-school library groaned.

But the Lord knew best what kind of soil and climate this tender plant needed, and before she was two years old he took her home to dwell with the angels. After that the light faded from the mother's eyes, and hope and happiness died out of her heart. Hiram Armstrong and his friends said that she was dying of consumption; but the world's people said that she was freezing to death, for the want of love and sympathy. She died as she had lived, ministered unto only by such of the neighbors as her husband chose to call in, and tortured to the eternal salvation. The many people who knew what a life of bondage and subjection she had led, rejoiced to know that the pure spirit had been freed at last; and so, as the church-bell sent out the tidings of her release, they said fervently, "Thank God!"

Hiram Armstrong was not one to murmur at the dispensation of providence. The Lord had seen fit to take from him the wife of his home, if not of his heart; and he would have thought himself the vilest of sinners had he rebelled against the will of the Lord. So he purchased for his departed spouse a costly monument to show the world how much he had loved her, and then went his accustomed way.

Twelve months passed by, and again he felt that he needed a wife. But now that he was beginning to feel the weight of years, he no longer sought a partner among the youthful; this time, much to the surprise of all who knew him, his choice fell upon a maiden lady of his own town, though not of his own church.

People were surprised at his choice, because, though belonging to that abused class called "old maids," she had lost none of her youthful spritliness and vivacity, and could still laugh and joke with the gayest. Strange to say, she encouraged his addresses, and in three months after the matter began to be talked of in public, they were married.

The day before the ceremony was to be performed she sat alone, thinking over her prospects in life, when two of her most intimate friends entered.

"We have come to bid you farewell," said the elder of the two with mock solemnity.

"Why, I am not going out of town!" she replied.

"No, but you might as well be. We shall never meet again after you are married."

"I am not so sure of that. I shall have a dozen or so of my friends take tea with me before I have been married a month. If you do not both refuse my invitation, you will both be among the number."

"That's a good joke!" said the other lady. "Even if Hiram Armstrong were out of town, Mrs. Grump, the old house-keeper, would veto a tea party."

"I shall not ask Mrs. Grump, consent; neither shall I wait for Hiram Armstrong to be out of town before I receive company."

"It's all very well for you to talk," said the first speaker; "but we know just how it will be. He kept his first wife cooped up there, never allowing her out, except to some sort of church meeting, and never allowing her to see any young company that she cared for, till the poor thing pined away and died from sheer loneliness and heart-sickness! There was some excuse for her becoming Mrs. Armstrong, she was young, and did not know his peculiarities; but you have known him all your life, and are walking right into the tomb with your eyes open! I didn't think you such a"——

"Fool! let me finish the sentence for you and thank you for your congratulations. No doubt they have the merit of sincerity. Now let me have my say. I know you both too well to think you will repeat a word of what I say, so I will express my opinion freely. I confess that I am not desperately in love with Hiram Armstrong, that is, in love like the foolish young girls that we read of in novels; but he has his good traits, and I believe I can make an average sort of husband of him. He owns a handsome house"——

"Yes; but why do you care how handsome your prison is, as long as it is a prison?"

"Don't interrupt me please; it isn't polite. As I was saying, he owns a handsome house, and has all the worldly goods that one need desire. If he were not so bigoted and self-conceited, he would really be a good match. I am sure he is good-looking"——

"He looks well enough; but excuse the interruption and go on."

"Well, I always thought that if that pretty little wife of his had shown proper spirit, she would have got along better with him. I always had a passion for managing people, and I am going to try my hand at managing him. If I don't prove myself mistress of the situation, I shall be very much mistake."

I hope you will succeed; but for my part, I shouldn't dare to try the experiment. I am afraid you will fail."

"A brave commander never knows defeat. Will you help make up my tea party?"

"Yes; when shall it be? Give yourself ample time. We can wait."

"I said in one month; but perhaps we shall get to feeling more free and easy in two, so I will make it two. To-morrow will be the first day of July; and just two months from day after to-morrow, which will be the second day of September, I will have my party. Don't fail to come both of you; but don't mention it till I give out the other invitations."

"Certainly not. Peace be with you!" and with this benediction the friends took their departure.

The next day they were married; it was a quiet ceremony at the parsonage, with no

witnesses except the pastor's family, and instead of starting at once on a wedding tour, Hiram Armstrong took his new wife directly to the grand and solomn house which had been but a dreary prison to his first wife.

Mrs. Grump had thrown open the parlor blinds, and set out the dinner in the dining-room, instead of the kitchen, where their meals were usually served; and that was all that was done in honor of the new bride. But more than this had not been expected; and with an inward determination to breathe a little life into the silent house, Mrs. Armstrong entered upon the new duties of wife and mistress.

A few days passed by very pleasantly, and then came a change. One morning she came down from her room to find all the blinds closed, and every ray of light excluded from the front of the house. She knew that this was her husband's work, for she had heard him about it, while Mrs. Grump was preparing breakfast. Now was the time for diplomatic action, and with hasty hand she threw open both windows and blinds, and let a whole flood of fragrant air and golden sunshine come rushing into the rooms. Hiram Armstrong was out in the yard, and with something like a frown upon his face he came straight up to the window. Before he could utter a word of remonstrance, his wife said:—

"What in the world does Mrs. Grump mean by shutting out all the light and air? Why, the room seemed as dismal as a tomb!"

"Mrs. Grump did not do it," said he hesitatingly. "I did it myself."

"Are we to go away, that you want the house to be shut up?"

"No; but I saw that the sun was fading the carpets and furniture, so I thougth it best to close the blinds."

"Oh, is that all? Well, we cannot dispense with sun and air; so, if you please, we will take up the carpets and furniture and pack them away in the dark closet in the attic."

"What, and have the rooms bare?"

"We will have the floors bare, and get some plain wooden furniture that will not be injured by the sun. This is the pleasantest part of the house, and we can't let such trifles as carpets and furniture prevent us from enjoying it. I will help you take up the carpets directly after breakfast, if you wish."

Hiram Armstrong felt nonplussed. He did not know how to manage such a case; so without a word he turned and walked away, while his wife, with a merry song that rang through the whole house, went about arranging curtains and blinds to suit her own taste. She knew perfectly well that her proud, stately husband would never consent to the removal of his handsome furniture, and she felt sure that she had gained one point.

A day or two later he ventured to remonstrate with her once ag in, upon what he deemed the extravagant folly of keeping the whole house open as though it were filled with company.

"My dear," said he hesitatingly, "why do you keep the whole house open for only us two?"

"Because there are only us two to keep it open for," replied she, gayly.

"But my first wife seldom opened the parlor or sitting-room."

"Where did you sit then!"

"In the dining-room occasionally; but generally in our own chamber, or in the kitchen with Mrs. Grump."

"Mercy on us, what taste! But I am not going to condmen you to those gloomy rooms! Why, one might as well not have a handsome house to live in, as to have one and not live in it! Aren't those flowers in the vases pretty?"

"Yes; but it is all nonsense."

"What is all nonsense?"

"Having so many flowers about."

"Then the making of them must have been all nonsense. O Hiram! I am sure you don't believe that!"

Hiram Armstrong was not prepared to carry his argument further, and the subject was dropped for all time. Every morning the rooms were opened and aired, fresh flowers adorned the vases and hanging baskets, and while Mrs. Grump groaned audibly at the change, the whole house took on a different aspect from what it had worn in the days of the first Mrs. Armstrong.

One morning, as Hiram Armstrong was preparing to leave town for the day on business which his wife knew was too urgent to admit of postponement, she said to him:—

"By the way, there is one thing wanting in the sitting-room, and I am going up town to order it to-day. Will you furnish the money, or shall I have it charged?"

"Neither; I will go with you to-morrow."

"Oh, but I have made up my mind to have it to-day."

"What is it?"

"I am not going to tell you," said she smilingly. "It is to be a surprise. You will see it to-night."

"Really, I have no small bills with me."

"Never mind, I shall feel quite proud saying, 'My husband will call and settle the bill!' Your credit is good, I suppose."

"Of course; but I am not in the habit of running in debt."

"Well, you needn't remain in debt over night. You can run up and pay it this evening if you wish."

The rumble of the approaching train was heard, and Mr. Armstrong was obliged to hasten to the station, only half satisfied with himself or his wife. Business, however, put all other things out of his mind, and he never thought of his wife's purchase until, just as they were rising from the tea-table that evening, she said to him:—

"Come, now, and see what I bought to-day. You know I was going to surprise you."

She led the way to the sitting-room, and there, fitting into a niche as nicely as though it had been made for just that place, stood a handsome piano.

"Mrs. Armstrong, have you bought that thing?"

"Yes; isn't it nice?"

"What did it cost!"

"Only three hundred dollars."

"Three hundred dollars! And you expect me to pay for it!"

"Yes; I knew you could afford it. If you had been poor I should never have thought of it. There is any amount of music in it. Just hear it." And without giving him time for another word, she sat down and commenced playing and singing some of the beautiful church hymns, which she knew he was particularly fond of.

As I said before, it was beneath Hiram Armstrong's dignity to scold and rave, and not knowing what to do he stood silently by and listened. The instrument was a good one, Mrs. Armstrong had a sweet voice, and somehow the music seemed to soothe the angry feelings that this unwarrantable act of his wife had aroused. Before she had finished, he thought to himself that it was not so bad a thing to have a piano in the house, after all; for now, when the church members met there as they sometimes did, they could have music and singing, as well as prayers. He did not admit this to his wife, though. The only remark he made as she turned from the piano was:—

"I am surprised that you should have taken such a liberty; don't ever let it happen again."

"No," replied she demurely; "I don't think I shall ever want another."

For the first time in his life Hiram Armstrong had found a will as strong as his own, and a purpose that was so quietly and persistently carried into execution, that there was really no chance for him to oppose it.

And all this while, Mrs. Grump without one harsh word or arbitrary rule, was made to feel that she was no longer mistress, but servant.

A few days after the arrival of the piano, Mrs. Armstrong found the old domestic laying the table for dinner in the kitchen, within a few feet of the glowing stove.

"Why have you not set the table in the dining-room, as usual?" she inquired.

"Because," replied Mrs. Grump, "it makes so much more work; and Mr. Armstrong is willing to eat in the kitchen."

"But I shall not eat in the kitchen; and I don't think it would save labor to set two tables."

"The first Mrs. Armstrong always used to eat in the kitchen, when there was no company here."

"You seem to forget one thing, Mrs. Grump!"

"What is it?"

"That I am not the first Mrs. Armstrong, and I am in no way bound to carry out her plans. When I came here, I came as mistress, and as such I intend to remain. You will oblige me by removing the dinner to the dining-room; and never again set the table for me in the kitchen, unless I desire you to."

Mrs. Grump set about moving the dishes, but with a sullen, spiteful manner that was perfectly exasperating. When the last article had been removed, she came and stood before her mistress.

Mrs. Armstrong," said she, "I have lived in this house more than twenty years, and have never had a hard word with anybody; but I don't think you and I will get on well together. I am too old to put up with your new-fangled notions, and I had better leave, though goodness knows where I shall go to, at my time of life.?"

"Very well, Mrs. Grump, I should never

think of discharging an old and faithful domestic like yourself; and I should be sorry to have you go out into the world at your time of life; still, if you are sure that you cannot put up with my ways, you had better leave. I will speak to Mr. Armstrong about your wages. Or stop a moment; he will not be home until evening, and if you wish to leave this afternoon, I will pay you out of my own purse."

Mrs. Grump burst into tears. She had not really meant to go; and Mrs. Armstrong surmised as much. Still she pitied the old woman, and said kindly:—

"Remember, it was your own proposal, Mrs. Grump. As I said before, I should be sorry to have you leave; but you are at liberty to do so if you like. I shall have no trouble in finding some one to fill your place; but whoever comes into this house as a servant, will understand distinctly that I am mistress, though I do not mean to be a hard one. You know that both Mr. Armstrong and myself have often urged you to to have an assistant in the kitchen, for neither of us wish you to labor hard; and it is your own choice to do the work alone. Think the matter over a while; I should be glad to have you stay, but if you wish to leave you can do so at your earliest convenience."

That was the last that Mrs. Armstrong heard about it. Mrs. Grump prepared tea as usual, and the only change noticeable in her demeanor was an added touched of humility.

That evening a few of Mrs. Armstrong's old friends called, and a very social time they had. The hostess, with ready tact, drew her husband into the conversation, and managed it in such away that he could not fail to become interested. After awhile music was introduced, and the sound of merry song and chorus stirred the echoes in the grand old house, and roused Mrs. Grump from her doze in the old arm-chair in the kitchen, causing her to wonder "if Hiram Armstrong would allow his new wife to turn the house topsy-turvy.

After her visitors had left, Mrs. Armstrong turned to her husband, and said, with apparent ignorance of giving offence:—

"Didn't you like those songs, Hiram?"

"No, I didn't! I think such sentimental trash too abominable to be sung in a christian family!"

"Why, I think them splendid! You wouldn't want to sing doleful psalms all the week round!"

"Doleful psalms, as you call them, are much more appropriate in a sinful world like this, than such frivolous nonsense as you surprised me by singing this evening!"

"What a mistake God made then, when he created the canary and bobolink, instead of making all birds owls and ravens! But there is one song which I saved on purpose to sing to you alone, so you must hear it. I know you will like it."

Before he could utter a word of objection she sat down at the piano, and began to play and sing the sweet, sad song of "Christie Deane." For a moment after the last note ceased, there was silence in the room; then Mrs. Armstrong said:—

"Now, Hiram, you must sing one song with me! I know you can sing, for I have heard you at the prayer-meetings; so come let us have 'Auld Lang Syne'!" And she commenced the familiar air, motioning her husband to follow.

After a few lines had been sung, he ventured to join his voice with hers, but feeling all the while as bashful and ashamed as a schoolboy who is caught in the act of composing his first sonnet. But the ice was broken, that was all that the wily diplomatist expected, and without another word of reproof, Hiram Armstrong retired, feeling strangely like the old woman who did not know whether she were herself or somebody else.

Meanwhile the tea-party had not been forgotten; and as August was in its prime, Mrs. Armstrong felt that it was time to give the subject serious thought. She was wise enough to know that if she announced her intention of making a party for her own particular friends, her husband, though he might not object to it in words, had it in his power to show her guests their presence was unwelcome to him; so, like a skillful general, she employed a little strategy in order to accomplish her purpose.

"Don't you think," she asked the next morning at breakfast, "that we ought to invite the minister and his wife here to tea?"

"I don't know; perhaps it would be the right thing, but I never thought of it."

"Were they ever invited here?"

"No."

"That seems to me rather unsocial, as you have been a member of his church so many years. If I were you I would invite them, with a few of your friends and fellow-

worshipers, to spend the afternoon with us."

"You will have to entertain them; and that will make a great deal of extra work."

"I don't mind that; I can help Mrs. Grump get ready for them, and then I will do my best to be agreeable. Perhaps I can preside at the tea-table in a way that you will not be ashamed of me."

"Of course you can! Who will you have, and how many?"

"Invite just whom you please. Come to think of it, we can have twelve as well as less, and I know there are as many as that whose company you would enjoy. Now make your selections at once, and I will take down the names." So the list was made out, and Mrs. Armstrong smiled as she looked it over. There were the names of Minister Barnes and his wife, and five other couples of the strictest and stiffest sectarians that the church contained.

"There," said she, "we will have a pleasant time I am sure! We will send out the invitations to-day, and have them here to-morrow. Will that suit you."

"Yes; but I thought you did not like those people."

"Oh, I have nothing against them, except their coldness, and I suppose they cannot help that. I believe we ought to treat decent people with courtesy, even if we do not fancy every trait of their character?"

"Quite right. I am sure you are very kind to think of entertaining my friends for me. What can I do to help you?"

"Nothing until to-morrow; then be prepared to wear your brightest smiles, and make the day pass so pleasantly that your guests will love to think of it."

Everything was in readiness for the visitors long before they arrival; and when they came they were welcomed by Mrs. Armstrong with such kind cordiality that their hearts warmed toward her, in spite of themselves. The tea-table was a marvel of taste and skill, and the hostess presided with such ease and grace, that her saintly husband was worldly-minded enough to feel proud of her.

In the evening the piano was opened, and Mrs. Armstrong's sweet voice mingled with the cracked and discordant ones of her guests, and sent up hymn after hymn with which they had for years been familiar. At the last Mr. Armstrong surprised his wife by asking her to sing "Christie Deane." Then followed "Auld Land Syne," in which every one present joined; after that came the hand-shaking and "good-nights;" and as the door closed upon the last one, both host and hostess felt that each of their guests had passed a pleasant day.

That was the way in which Mrs. Armstrong brought about her own tea-party. Of course after all the kindness and consideration shown by his wife toward guests of his own choosing, Mr. Armstrong could do no less than show the same spirit toward his wife's friends; and so the second party was as much of a success as the first had been. There were present the very croakers who had predicted for her such a gloomy life, and they were surprised beyond measure at the ease and freedom with which she ruled the household, as well as by the gentlemanly and almost cordial manner of her husband.

There were songs and games in the evening, and though he declined to take part in them, he appeared to look and listen with interest and pleasure; and when at a late hour they took leave he stood with his wife at the gate and cordially invited them to repeat the visit.

"I declare for it!" said one of the visitors afterward, "I never was so surprised in my life! Helen Holmes always said she had a talent for managing people, and she has proved it! If Hiram Armstrong's first wife had only shown half as much gumption she might have been alive now."

But a greater surprise than this was in store for the village people. It was well known that Hiram Armstrong took no interest at all in children; in fact, that his own child had been considered by him a cross rather than a blessing; so when it became noised abroad one cold wintery day in January, that only the night before, some heartless wretch had left upon the stately man's threshold a poor little waif of humanity, over whose head only a few days at the most had rolled, it was decided by all that Hiram Armstrong would carry it at once to the almshouse. Mrs. Armstrong did not think so, however. She was passionately fond of children, and since God had given her none of her own, she determined to adopt this one. She knew better than to say so at once, though; and when her husband proposed to send it away, she only said:—

"We will keep the poor thing a few days until it is a little stronger. It seems almost dead from neglect, now; and it would be like murder to leave it in careless hands. Who

know but what the Lord sent it to us for a purpose?"

So the babe was kept day after day upon one pretence or another, and when, three weeks later, Mrs. Armstrong laid it in her husband's arms, a rosy, healthy infant, and told him smilingly that she had decided to call it Hiram Armstrong, Jr., a thrill of almost fatherly tenderness ran through his veins.

After that, nothing could induce him to have the child sent away. He was getting old, he said, and needed some one to help him in his old age, and he might as well bring a boy up for that purpose, as to depend upon hired servants who would feel no interest in him, only to see that he had their wages ready.

The advent of this little one made a great change in the grand old house. Playthings were scattered about in every direction; childish laughter and pattering footsteps were heard in all the rooms; and as the months passed by, and the boy showed signs of more than common beauty and intelligence, no father could be prouder of his babe than was Hiram Armstrong of his adopted son.

Mrs. Armstrong's old friends, who had grown to be extremely social and neighborly, often caught the proud man at a game of romp with the mischievous boy, and as they looked smilingly on they said to themselves, "Who would have thought it?"

"GHOSTS" FOUND OUT.

By George Brancroft Griffith.

MOST of the frights that come to human nerves originate in mystery. Objects are trembled at simply because they are unknown or half known, and curses are fancied in fear, with an almost instinctive leaning toward the supernatural. Few cases of "haunted" houses have been known where patient inquiry and search could not "lay the ghost," and the following story, told of one of the old baronial castles in the north of England (the favorite abode of ghosts), shows how extremely simple the solution of a most frightful mystery may be.

Not many years ago the property referred to descended to a branch of the female line—one of the heroes of Waterloo—who, nothing daunted by its evil name, was determined to make this castle his place of residence. Certain noises having become a subject of real terror to his tenantry, he resolved to sleep in the castle on the night he took possession, in order to do away with these superstitious fears.

Not a habitable room could be found, except the one occupied by the old gardener and his wife, in the western turret, and he ordered his camp bed to be set up in that apartment.

It was in the autumn. At nightfall he repaired to the gloomy abode, leaving his servant, to his no small comfort, at the village inn. After having found everything comfortably provided, he turned the large old rusted key upon the gardener and his wife, who took leave of him to lodge at a farm hard by.

It was one of those nights which are checkered with occasional gleams of moonshine and darkness, when the clouds are riding on a high wind. He slept pretty well for the first two hours. Then he was awakened by a low mournful sound that ran through the apartments. This warned him to be up and accoutred.

He descended the turret stairs with a brilliant light, which, in coming to the grand floor, cast a gigantic shadow of himself upon the high embattled walls. Here he stood and listened. Presently a hollow moan ran through the long corridor, and died away. This was followed by one of a higher key, a sort of scream, which directed his footsteps with more certainty to the spot.

Pursuing the sound, he found himself in the great hall of his ancestors, and vaulting up on the large oaken table, set down his lamp, and folding his cloak about him, determined to wait for all that was terrible. The night, which had been stormy, suddenly became still. The dark flitting clouds had sunk beneath the horison, and the moon threw her silvery light through the chinks of the mouldering pile. As our hero had spent

the morning in the chase, sleep came unbidden, and he fell asleep on the table.

His dream was short, for near him issued a horrid groan. Amazed, he started up and sprang at the unseen voice, thrusting with a fearful blow his sword in the arras. The blade was fast, and held him to the spot. Behind the waving folds there lay the cause concealed. He left his sword, and retraced his steps to the turret.

When morning came, a welcome crowd greeting him, asked if he had met the ghost.

"Oh, yes," replied the knight, "dead as a door-nail behind the screen he lies, where my sword has pinned him fast. Bring the wrenching-bar, and we'll have the disturber out!"

With such a leader, and broad day to boot, the valiant throng tore down the screen where the sword was fixed, when, lo! in a recess lay the fragments of a chapel organ, and the square wooden trunks, made for hollowed sounds, were used as props to stay the work when the hall was coated round with oak. The wondering crowds laughed aloud at the mysterious voice. It was the northern blast that found its way through the crannies in the wall to the groaning pipes, that had alarmed the country round for a century past.

Very few ghost stories have such a solid foundation as the one told of Joseph I., Emperor of Germany, a merry gentleman, and as brave at heart as he was sturdy in biceps.

He was a bosom friend of the elector of Saxony; a royal scamp, whose bump of reverence hardly equalled his love for the flesh. Joseph was a good Catholic, and his friends of the church were in considerable fear lest the elector should lead him from the true faith. They tried almost every device to break the companionship between them, but all to no purpose. Finally a jealous Jesuit father disguised himself in Satanic attire, and silently entered the emperor's chamber late in one dark night. Clinking heavy links of chain, and placing himself near the bed, where the dim light from the solitary taper could fall upon his figure, in very sepulchral voice, the startled emperor.

"Renounce, O Emperor, thy intimacy with the elector of Saxony, or prepare for eternal damnation!"

The muscular magnate, not caring to be bored with unearthly callers at an unseasonable hour, leaped from his couch, and catching up in his arms his phantom visitor, launched him out of the window, saying:—

"Return to Purgatory, whence you came!"

A broken thigh was his ghostship's reward.

A man who bought a haunted house in Colosse, N. S., sought an explanation of the mysterious noises with a hammer. He pulled off a few clapboards, when an explanation flew out, followed by several hundred more. About a bushel of large black bats were discovered, cozily making themselves at home in various crannies of the building, and making the people decidedly "not at home" by their clatter and noise at night. Those bats, when discovered, took all the romance out of the haunted house, and cut a long story short.

Practical jokers have often played the ghost. They are the last person who take kindly to a joke played upon themselves. An English servant girl, however, was once taught to respect the old saying, "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

The coachman of Commodore Porter, famous during the war of 1812, died, and a few days after, the colored servants were alarmed at the appearance of the ghost. Every night about seven o'clock, they would rush up-stairs in great fright, declaring that Nathan's ghost was in the cellar. Knowing that some one was playing a joke, the commodore watched. That night he saw one of the house-girls enter the cellar-window, dressed in a long night-gown, her face sprinkled with flour, and a lighted candle in her hand. The next night, the commodore—dressed to resemble the dead man, with blackened hands and face, and a wood-saw in his hand—waited for the ghost.

As soon as he heard footsteps, he began sawing-wood. The girl entered the cellar, and the wood-sawyer, stopping his work, said, in sepulchral tones:—

"Miss Jane, de Almighty done send me for you!" With a shriek the frightened woman rushed from the cellar, ran out of the house, and took to the woods. The lesson, though severe, was such as she deserved. She never again played the part of a ghost.

Some years ago a gentleman's family hired a spacious old mansion-house, in a retired region, and took up their abode there. It was in a lonely situation, separated from public view by the long rows of old trees which bordered the road and the avenue. One night as a young lady of the family was

preparing for bed, she heard a strange, hollow, murmuring sound, as of distant voices. Though startled, she finally decided that it was voices of men in the road, and settled herself as for the night. But scarcely had her head touched the pillow, when she heard the sounds again, and springing to her feet, she went directly to a corner closet, where they seemed to proceed.

When she opened it a strong gust of damp wind blew in her face and almost extinguished her lamp. Then came the sound of distant talking again, and she thought she caught the words, "Poor thing! Poor thing! Too bad! Too bad!"

She was for the moment paralyzed with terror, but resolved not to rouse the family, if she could possibly avoid it, feeling sure the sounds could be accounted for in some natural way. A few nights after the unearthly noises were heard again from the same closet-corner, but nothing could be found there to account for them. The lady's brother determined to unravel the mystery, occupied the room one night, and before morning, opening the closet, he distinctly heard the woods, "Poor thing! Too bad! Too bad!" uttered in tones not only hollow, put also painfully plaintive.

It was subsequently discovered that in the extreme corner of the closet was a section of of old tin pipe. In the closet of the nursery was the other end of the speaking-tube. The nurse occupying this room had been particularly annoyed by mice in her closet, and had set a trap there. Hearing the little captives scratching about as they were caught in their wiry prison, she and one of the othet servants had risen upon the nights referred to, to secure them, and to make the trap ready for other victims, repeating the words heard. This was the key to the mystery.

SIR THOMAS PUGGINS.

By Helen Herbert.

YOU may never have heard of him, but Sir Thomas Puggins was really an important personage. I am sorry that he had not a more euphonious name. In justice he should have been called Nimrod, for he was a "mighty hunter." One day when he was only a kitten, Trudie dressed him in jacket and trousers, put a little cap on his head, then marched him up to mamma, and introduced him, as her uncle, Sir Thomas Puggins. The name clung to him, and he was called Puggins, Puggy or Pugg till the day of his death. Trudie often said it was a shame. In that case, it is plain that she herself was to blame for it.

But if you had known him you would have cared little whether his name was pretty or not, just as you would have cared little whether he was pretty or not. He did not seem to care in the least, but said, "Er-r-r?" (what do you what?) when his friends called "Puggins!" as pleasantly as if it were ever so grand a name.

Perhaps you would like to know how he looked. His fur was gray, striped with black. There were black rings about his eyes like spectacle rims; narrow stripes running back toward the ears and neck. The top of the head was black, and from this a black stripe continued along the back, and down to the very tip of his tail, a long and elegant appendage of which he was exceedingly proud. His tail and legs were ringed regularly with black, and black stripes down his sides. Indeed, he looked very much like a small tiger. But appearance, in his case, at least, were deceitful. Never was there a gentler, kinder creature. Trudie said he was a sheep in tiger's clothing. His eyes were large, unusually far apart, and something like topaz in color and brilliancy. In the winter he weighed thirteen or fourteen pounds. Warm weather did not agree with him, and in the summer he usually lost some flesh.

Sometimes unappreciative strangers, who saw Puggins from a distance, would call him ugly. Then Trudie and Nelly, yes, and mamma, too, would look at each other, smile pityingly, and tell the visitors he was worth all the handsome cats in existence.

At a very early age he showed a fondness

for human society, infinitely preferring it to that of his own race. His faith in his friends was beautiful to behold; but he had an ineradicable distrust of strangers. At the sound of steps on the walk, or a ring at the front door, he would rush for another door, in his haste often knocking his head against it in a way that, but for the proverbial hardness of a cat's cranium, might have been alarming.

He often brought mice, rabbits, and other rare game to Nelly and Trudie, and seemed very much disgusted at their lack of appreciation; for, although they praised and petted him to his heart's content, they would never eat the dainty morsels he had taken such pains to provide.

One day his mistress took a mouse from him, and gave it to a white kitten that had been for some time an invalid. From that day forward the ailing kitten never lacked for mice and tender young gophers, and began to thrive wonderfully. Once, when the kitten was hungry, his mistress said:—

"Puggy, go and get Whitey a mouse."

He left the room at once, and in about ten minutes came back with a fine mouse in his mouth, which he immediately gave to the kitten. He evidently understood his mission, and was quite willing to perform it.

Some years after this, when Trudie was quite a young lady, she thought she would like a bird's wing to put on her hat. Puggins was near her, watching her work, with a benign and interested face, and she said:—

"Puggy, I wish you would go and catch a bird for me."

She spoke quite carelessly, and thought no more of the matter. As it was growing dark she put aside her work, and went to her room, which was on the ground floor, with a door opening on the front porch. By and by she heard Puggins mewing and scratching at this door. This was so unusual that she opened the door at once to see what was the matter. In rushed Puggins with something in his mouth. It was not a bird, but a mouse, and he dropped it at her feet, with an air that plainly showed a consciousness of duty well performed. This may have been only a coincidence; but Trudie always declared that he had understood what she said, and, failing to find a bird at that late hour, had brought her a mouse as the next best thing.

Puggins found his way to the favor and love of all. Other cats might be liked and petted, but he had a place and an individuality of his own. The other cats were cats; he was a friend and companion. All representatives of the feline tribe who came in contact with him seemed to understand this, and deferred to him as a superior being. Puggins understood it too, and bore himself toward his companions with kindness, with generosity always, but with a dignified reserve that effectually prevented any presumption on their part. Only one among the number was ever admitted to anything like intimacy. This was a large, black cat, who rejoiced in the name of Nig. Nig was not so much favored as some of his companions. It may be that Puggins considered him ill-treated, and tried to make up for the short-comings of others by his own valuable attentions. Many a time did he carry to the corner where Nig sat, silent and disconsolate, some dainty bit that had been given him from the table, drop it before him, and then go back and beg another for his own delectation. Once he marched into the pantry, wholly indifferent to the amused glances that followed him, pulled open the cupboard door, deftly fastened his claws into a doughnut which had been left from the breakfast-table, pulled it out, then took it in his mouth and carried it to Nig, who was calmly waiting by the kitchen fire. Nig was properly grateful for all these favors, I assure you. Indeed his devotion to his generous friend and benefactor was quite touching. He deferred to him, imitated him, and followed him everywhere. Trudie and Nelly called the two Johnson and Boswell, David and Jonathan, and sometimes Orestes and Pylades, for Nig had a wily tongue, and Puggins was certainly a prince—among cats.

The older Puggins grew, the more like a human being he became in his habits. Perhaps because he was always so intimately associated with human beings. He preferred his steak cooked, and would go hungry all day rather than eat from a dish with the other cats. Only the extremity of thirst would force him to drink from a dish less dainty than a tumbler or tea-cup; and he would never lie on the floor if he could find a chair or lounge. He seemed to possess the instinct of courtesy. I hope you will not laugh at this, for it is quite true. No one had to push or order him out of the way. He divided, somehow, what was wanted of him, and behaved as any gentleman would, in like circumstances. When

he wished to make his toilette, he usually retired into a corner, or behind a curtain, if such corner or curtain could be found. The girls said all he lacked was the power of speech. It seemed sometimes as if he, too, felt this deficiency, and tried his best to make up for it. It is wonderful how much he could express, and how easily he could make himself understood, by his gestures, the inflections of his voice, and the expression of his eyes.

One of Puggins's most marked characteristics was his love for music. Nelly often put a chair for him beside the organ, and there he would sit for ever so long, listening contentedly while she played. Sometimes she took him in her lap, put his paws on the keys, and played some simple ltttle tune with them. ("Greenville" was his favorite) This was a great treat, and his face wore a look of perfct beatitude as he purred a vigorous accompaniment to the music.

When he was about a year old Nelly left home to visit some relatives in a distant state. She was away several months and Puggins missed her sadly. One day Trudie went to the organ. She was too young to play much, but while strumming over some of her childish exercises, she came upon one of Nelly's pieces, and played it through. Puggins ran to her, stretched up and put his paws around her waist as far as he could reach, purring and rubbing his head against her. It may be that he thought for the moment that Nelly had come home again. It was plain that the tune had some pleasant associaiton for him.

Some years after this a piano was brought into the house, and Puggins was very much frightened. The noise and bustle, the strange men hurrying about seemed to him to portend some terrible disaster. The dealer stayed after the other men had left the house, to see that everything was in good order. Then he began to play, and for a long time the air was full of beautiful music. After a time, Nelly had occasion to pass through a door that opened into another room. It was ajar, and a chair had been pushed into the corner behind it. And there, in the chair, sat Puggins, listening with all his ears. The poor fellow had not been able to resist the charm of the music, and had made a compromise with his timidity by getting behind the door. After the stranger had gone he ventured into the parlor and sniffed at the strange instrument until he became satisfied that it was not dangerous, then seemed to accept it as a part of the household belongings. If left in the room alone when the piano was open, this music-loving cat would invariably jump on the keys and walk up and down until some one heard the noise and took him away.

After a time Nelly became ill. Puggins was very, very sorry for her, and devoted a great deal of time to her diversion and entertainment, and although the weeks lengthened into months, the months into years, and Nelly still lay in her darkened chamber, he never swerved from his allegiance nor relaxed his affectionate attentions. He learned to know her bell, and often ran to her room when he heard it, as if he thought it might be an especial summons for him. Rarely indeed did he let a day pass without giving her at least one visit. Sometimes, to be sure, when the weather was very tempting and game plenty, he could not bring himself to leave his happy hunting-grounds until nearly evening. Then he would rush into the house, up the stairs and into Nelly's room, and begin a lively conversation. Perhaps he was trying to explain to her what had kept him so long away.

He often invited himself to dinner with her, and sometimes even to breakfast; but as he conducted himself at the table with the utmost courtesy and good-breeding, he was always a welcome guest. He would sit on the bed with his paws folded over a cloth which served him as a napkin, and wait quietly and trustfully for the dainty bits he was sure to get, sooner or later. Sometimes, when he was very hungry and the dinner slow in coming, he would put his paw on Nelly's hand and try to draw it toward him. If the sharp claws touched her, she needed only to make a little pretence of pain, and next time they would be carefully sheathed. Once, contrary to custom, she took the first mouthful of the dinner herself instead of giving it to him. You should have seen the look he gave her. Surprise, reproach, disappointment and utter disgust were all so clearly expressed and so comically mingled in that one swift glance, that she dropped her fork and began to laugh, thus adding insult to injury, for he could not bear to be laughed at.

One day Nelly and her mamma were laughing heartily over an amusing story, when, happening to look up, they saw an odd sight. Puggins was sitting in the cor

ner by the chimney, with his back toward them and his tail curled close around his feet, looking straight up at the ceiling. This was his way of showing or rather of trying to show, his utter indifference to the ridicule of which he felt he was the object; and it was a long time before they could persuade him to accept their apologies, and forgive the supposed affront.

If another cat was allowed to enter Nelly's room, Puggins always departed in high dudgeon. On one such occasion there was no one to let him out. He sat before the door until his patience was exhausted, and his tail began to switch ominously. Then he turned and walked deliberately around the stove to the far corner, where a meek little blue kitten was sitting, and boxed her ears soundly. Having given the presumptuous intruder to understand that if she remained in the room it was not through his sufferance, he retired to a remote corner and pouted until little Miss Blue was sent away.

Puggins found his sick mistress's room so comfortable in cold weather that he often thought he would like to spend the night there. This he was not allowed to do. He felt assured, however, that Nelly was quite as anxious for his company through the long, cold night as he was for hers. So one night he hid in the hall, and after the house was still, began to scratch at her door, and call softly; yes, actually under his breath:—

"Ow, ow," then, "Er-r-r, er-r-r."

He never used the latter expression except when trying to communicate with people. Again and again he called earnestly, pleadingly, pleasantly, but always in the same hushed voice. And to Nelly, who was well versed in his language, it all said as plainly as words, "Nelly dear, I know you want to see me, and I've come to stay all night with you. Please let me in quick before any one else hears."

If she could have let him in she would have done so gladly, for her pet's faith in her was not wholly unfounded; but she could not, and all his supplications passed by, seemingly unheeded. Despite his care, Nelly's mamma heard him at last, and cruelly put him out-of-doors. He was so much offended with Nelly that he did not go near her again for several days. No doubt he felt that his confidence had been misplaced, his trust betrayed, and found it hard to forgive her.

But if I should attempt to describe half of the droll pranks and intelligent ways with which Puggins was always delighting and surprising his friends, I should never find a stopping place, and I will hasten at once to that part of my story which I like best to dwell upon.

One Sunday morning last May, Trudie returned home from the village, where she had been in school during the week. Puggins rushed to meet her as usual, and she saw that one of his paws was swollen to twice its usual size.

"Oh!" she cried, picking him up, "what is the matter with my Puggins?"

He at once put on the airs of an invalid, and lay languidly in her arms, while she pitied and caressed him. Then she carried him up-stairs, and put him in Nelly's arms. He laid his poor, swollen paw in her hand, dropped his limp head on her shoulder, and received her condolence with closed eyes, and a martyred air, but with very evident satisfaction. An invitation from Trudie proved an irresistible temptation, however, and they were soon engaged in a rough-and-tumble romp on the floor. When he was tired of this he curled himself up on the bed, where he stayed until dinner came. His appetite did not seem at all impaired, so no one apprehended much danger from his injury. But that is the last time Puggins was ever Nelly's guest at dinner.

The next morning his mistress noticed him curled up on the foot of her bed.

"How is Puggy's paw this morning?" she asked.

He purred, and held the paw toward her, and she saw that the swelling was nearly gone. So when Nelly asked after his health she received a favorable report. But he did not go to breakfast, nor yet to dinner. He even refused the appetizing morsels Nelly sent him from her salver, and appeared so dull and unlike himself that his mistress began to feel alarmed. She did not send him to sleep in the barn that night, but made him a cosy bed in the kitchen.

Despite all her care he was much worse next morning. She spoke to him and gently stroked his head, and he opened his heavy eyes, and tried his best to purr a response. But the effort was too great. The poor head dropped again and he lay seemingly unconscious of all about him, except when his mistress tried to give him some food or medicine. Then his piteous cries rang through the house. Nelly heard them, and

was, oh, so sorry! How she wished she might do something, anything to save her pet! but she could not even go to him. No one could help him, and that evening poor Puggins died.

Whether his death was caused by the mysterious injury done to his paw, or by poisoned meat thrown in his way by some one infected with the senseless mad-dog scare then raging, his friends do not know. They only know that they have lost him. Poor Nig refused to eat, and went wandering through the house and over the fields, calling a friend who never came, until there was nothing left of him but a thin, black shadow. And Nelly's dim room is gloomier than ever, as she lies there thinking sorrowfully of the pet whose generous affection, earnest though silent sympathy, and almost human intelligence, had brightened her lonely hours.

Memories of Puggins will long remain to those who knew and loved him, but there is nothing to speak of him now save a little mound under a rose-bush, at the head of which stands a slab bearing the simple inscription:—

PUGGINS.

Aged 8 Years, 6 Months

ELINOR'S FORTUNE.

By Mazie Preston.

CHAPTER I.

SITUATED in one of the wildest spots to be found along the seacoast of England, where the furious waves often beat with thundering reverberation upon the cliffs, and dashed their spray against the cottage windows, the little fishing hamlet of N—— possessed no claimes to beauty of any sort, but attracted solely by the weird wildness of its surroundings. The houses were mostly clustered together, as if for mutual protection, and were nearly all of the poorest sort, only a few having the least pretensions, to anything like ornament. The occupants were a rough but kindly people—the men hardy and brave, inured to danger by everyday experience, the women warm-hearted, but coarse and uneducated, as might be expected. The children of such parents were like them, and their noisy sports were seldom interrupted.

A little apart from the rest of the village, and in a spot more exposed to the sea, stood a dwelling rather better than the others, more thoroughly and neatly built, as if the one who erected it had possessed a mind above his companions, and had manifested it, perhaps unconsciously, in this way. In truth, the builder, Malcolm Keith, had ever been a mystery to the simple folks around him, who felt instinctively that he was of a different order from themselves. He had come to N——, no one knew whence, accompanied by his daughter, a beautiful child of four summers, and a middle aged woman who appeared to take the place of foster-mother to the child. In his house was what seemed to his unlearned neighbors a wonderful library; and, as Elinor Keith grew up, she was instructed by her father in all the branches of ordinary education, as well as in some others generally considered to abstruse for the feminine intellect. This singular man was finely educated, and taught his daughter to play with skillful and artistic hand upon the piano and guitar, which she accompanied with a voice of wonderful power, sweetness and expression.

Life on that dreary seacoast was very monotonous, but Elinor, or Nelly, as she was always called, knew no other, and was contented in the society of her father and "Aunty Katy," the elderly and affectionate nurse, who held no object on earth so dear as her beloved foster-child.

But this state of affairs could not always last. There came a time when Malcolm Keith could no longer take long walks with Nelly along the coast and share all her innocent pleasures. The hand of death was laid upon his brow, and it quickly grew cold beneath its icy pressure. In vain Nelly wept until she could weep no more, and

passed into a state of hopeless, tearless misery yet more appalling than her first wild burst of grief had been; the closed eyes of her father would not open at her bidding, nor his voice answer her own, let her speak never so entreatingly. At last nature was merciful, and she forgot her awful sorrow in the unconsciousness of delirium.

Weeks passed away, and Nelly slowly recovered health and strength, thanks to her vigorous youthful constitution. Often and often she turned her face upon the pillow and prayed for death—her life looked so utterly bare to her, but the prayer of her impatient heart was not granted, and she lived to play her part in the drama of life.

During those weary days of suffering, Nelly had two friends beside Aunt Katy who were ever ready to perform all those offices of kindness so dear to an invalid. Those were Agnes Lee, the one companion she had among the girls of the village, and Robert Derrick, a fisherman's son. The latter had always been a favorite with her father for his manly frankness and unusual intelligence; and the fastidious Keith had given Rebert many a lesson in the sciences, charmed by his eager perseverance and quick perception.

At the close of a sultry summer day, which even the sea-breeze could only render tolerable, the three friends were sitting together upon the rude piazza that adorned the front of Nelly's home. The latter had nearly recovered from the effects of her illness, and only an additional look of delicacy betrayed the fact that she was still slightly an invalid. Elinor Keith possessed a face of singular and expressive beauty—a beauty that would be more truly appreciated by the cultivated and refined than by the class of people around her. To speak in the language of one of her neighbors, they thought, "Nelly ain't so dreadful handsome, after all, but she has a way, somehow, to make you feel as if you'd do anything for her."

And, indeed, Nelly possessed the power of fascination to an unusual extent. There was a winning sweetness in her manner, a look bright and yet tender in her dark eyes, that was perfectly irresistable to ordinary mortals. Her eyes were large, dark, and gentle in their expression; her dark brown hair fell in rich curling masses around a fair and delicately-featured oval face, which was rendered bewitching by the variety of its ever-changing expressions, and her form was slight and graceful. At times, a light as of another world illumined her features, for she was a true child of genius, though she knew it not.

Agnes Lee, who set at Nelly's right was a perfect English blonde in complexion, pretty, and chiefly remarkable for her truly affectionate disposition. To look from the face of Agnes to that of Elinor was like glancing from a placid lake beneath serene heavens to a beautiful cascade, adorned by a rainbow where the sunshine falls upon its misty spray.

On Nelly's left sat Robert Derrick, than whom no titled favorite of fortune could boast a nobler presence. Manly he was in every sense of the word, and the fearless yet engaging glances of his deep blue eyes bespoke a soul superior to small aims or selfish aspirations. He looked with unmistakable tenderness at Nelly's half-averted face, as she gazed, with a look of deepest sadness, far out over the sunlit ocean. Agnes regarded them both and a shadow of pain dimmed the sunny light in her eyes as she, for the first time, realized the nature of Robert's feelings for Nelly. Ah, gentle Agnes! the pure love that filled her guileless heart was destined to meet with no fitting response from one whose whole soul was engrossed with thoughts and dreams of another. A silence had fallen on the group, and Elinor's eyes were still regarding the placid stretch of waters, when she spoke:—

"Do you know, I have a feeling to-day as if something terrible were coming? I have often had such sensations before a tempest, but never so strongly as now. Yet it does not look as though there would be a storm very soon; certainly never was there a brighter day than this; but in the very sunshine there seems to lurk a shadow that settles down thickly over my heart."

"Oh, it is only an invalid's fancy," returned Agnes, encouragingly, ever ready to cheer her friend. "One would not think, dear Nelly, that you were bred by the sea, from your strange dread of storms."

"I know it," returned Elinor, dreamily. Then, a look of animation kindling her beautiful eyes, she said, "I had a wonderful dream last night; would you like to hear it?"

Both her companions smiled assent as she looked from one to the other, and she began:—

"I dreamed that I saw my father, and his

face shone with angelic glory. He seemed to be standing above me at the head of a flight of steps, and he smiled upon me with the one word—'Come.' I cried out in thankfulness and joy at seeing him, and as I was about to step up and grasp his hand, he vanished from my view; and, instead of heavenly brightness, I beheld a barren coast, and I was standing on a cliff that overlooked the sea. Resting on the placid waves I saw a small bark, which had only one occupant, and that a woman. As I looked, she turned her face toward me, and I saw, to my astonishment—myself! Yes, it was the face and form of Elinor Keith! 'It is true, then,' I thought 'that we each had a double, and that girl in the boat is my *alter ego*.'

"I watched the phantom of myself with the greatest interest, and saw the frail shallop glide on. Suddenly a dark cloud arose and overspread the sky, the wind howled fiercely, and the sea became covered with foam. I tried to cry out to the figure in the boat to return quickly to the shore, but found myself speechless. The wild waves were tossing hither and thither, and seemed to converge to a common centre, forming a mighty whirlpool. Toward this fatal spot the boat with its one occupant was swiftly gliding, while I beheld with horror the dreadful fate that awaited my other self.

"On, on she swept, now rising on the crest of the great wave, now sinking out of sight between the mighty billows, and the Maelstrom grew fearfully near. With a strange agony, as if I were witnessing my own destruction, I watched the boat and its freight. Into the fatal whirlpoor they swept, and the boat commenced to circle round and round, each circle growing smaller as it approach the centre. Another second, and the boat and girl would disappear forever; but, as suddenly as it came, the gloom dispersed, and, instead of the foaming whirlpool, I saw a calm sunny sea, and instead of the boat and its occupant, a beautiful island, and the figures of a man and woman walking under blossoming trees. Their backs were towards me, but in the girl I recognized my mysterious other self. I awoke with a haunting feeling of dread that has not entirely left me yet."

As she ceased speaking, Elinor fell back wearily in her chair, the bright blush brought to her cheek by the excitement of narration changing to unusul pallor. Agnes laughed merrily as she exclaimed:—

"Quite a wonderful dream, truly, dear Nelly. I have had just such ones myself, but, behold, I never had an adventure in my life, and I dare to predict that nothing will come of yours. It had a good termination, too."

But Robert seemed to be more deeply impressed with Elinor's fancies, and involuntarily glanced around the horizon, as if to convince himself that no storm was gathering. All was apparently clear, and the smooth expanse of the sea certainly gave no hint of any near commotion. Elinor watched his face, and when he turned to her with a reassuring smile, her own countenance brigtened as if she felt strengthened by his ready sympathy.

"It was a singular dream," said he, "but you are not strong, and imagined it for that reason, probably."

Then a silence again ensued, and the hues of twilight deepened and darkened into night; the stars shone out, and the moon came up, pouring her silvery light over the waters, and softening the jagged outlines of the cruel rocks upon whose pitiless sides many a noble ship had been cast by wind and wave. Soon it grew too late for the convalescent to be exposed to the air even of a summer night. The good-nights were said—Robert held Nelly's delicate hand in his own strong clasp for a moment, and Agnes pressed her red lips to her cheek in a farewell greeting, for which she was envied.

Could they all have watched the sky that night, they would have seen a rapid change take place in the aspect of things. Wild-looking scuds soon chased one another over the sky, the wind rose, and brought with it a tempest-cloud black with destruction, and lit fearfully at short intervals with fiery flashes and vivid forks of lightning, followed by crash after crash of thunder. As the storm went on, Elinor awoke from her light slumber, and shuddered as she listened to the war of the elements. Going to the window, she drew back the curtains and looked out. A raging sea roared before her, shown by the almost incessant flashes, and far out on the water she caught sight of a vessel struggling for life against the forces of the tempest. Aunt Katy found her at the window, and tried to draw her away, but in vain; and at last had to content herself with throwing a light shawl around her and remaining by her side.

Nearer and nearer came the fated vessel

as it was revealed in the quick electric glare, and the signal-guns sounded mournfully to the ears of the watchers, for no help could reach the human souls on board in that tempestuous sea. The men of the village were on the alert, and all was done that was possible under the circumstances. The ship struck at a point near Elinor's home, and soon after they heard the tramp of men, and a rap at the door that heralded a demand for admittance, and succor for the seemingly dead man they bore into the house. Then all was confusion, soon reduced to order by the calm directions of Aunt Katy. The stranger was quickly restored to consciousness, and finally sank into a heavy sleep. Elinor, who could take no active part in the scene, at last closed her weary eyes, and quiet again reigned at the cottage.

When the morning sun shone upon the treacherous main it lighted a scene of disaster on the shore. Knots of the fishermen were gathered to inspect the wreck, and all faces were saddened, for four lives had been lost.

At Nelly's home there was anxiety, too, for the stranger who had been brought there the night before moaned in a high fever, and the physican declared that only the most careful nursing could save his life. Elinor, at this, insisted on taking her place at his bedside for a part of the time, as Aunt Katy was already worn with watching and care for herself, and as usual, she had her way, though with many remonstrances from her faithful nurse. The stranger called continually for "John," who was afterward ascertained to have been his servant and among the drowned.

The person thus unexpectedly introduced into Elinor's home was a man apparently about thirty, tall, with very haughty clear-cut features, light-brown curling hair and beard, and very bright glittering blue eyes. His hands were soft and white as a woman's, and his whole appearance indicated wealth and refinement. If his eyes shown coldly as ice in the sunshine, and his lips curled oftener with a sneer than a genuine laugh, it was not particularly noticed by those about him, and his soft low-pitched voice and gentle manners won the favor of Elinor and Aunt Katy. They soon learned his name and destination from his own lips. He was, he informed them, Sir Edward Morton of Morton Hill, of Leicestershire, and was on his way home from a tour abroad when he nearly lost his life from the effects of the tempest. He seemed deeply to regret the loss of his favorite servant, and commissioned Elinor to write to his London banker for remittances, part of which, on receiving them, he sent to the man's widow, with a letter informing her of the manner of her husband's death, Elinor still acting as amanuensis.

Indeed, as Sir Edward grew better, and was pronounced out of danger by his physician from town, he appeared to enjoy nothing more than to watch the beautiful and varying countenance of Nelly as she read to him from her favorite authors to amuse him during the slowly passing hours of convalescence. At length he walked for the first time from his room to the little parlor and sitting-room combined, and was surprised to see the piano, the only article indicating wealth in the apartment. Turning to Nelly he inquired:—

"Do you play and sing, Miss Elinor?"

"I did once, for my father's pleasure and my own," she replied, while the quick tears of anguish filled her eyes as she remembered the happy hours when she had sung for him whom she would see no more.

Not seeming to notice her emotion, the young baronet threw himself into an easy-chair, and begged for a song. Elinor reluctantly approached the instrument, but so great an influence had her guest already established over her that she felt a refusal would be impossible, while she knew that to grant the request would cause her most exquisite pain. Softly touching the keys, she played a mournfull prelude, and then sang a touching song of "Regret." As she sang her eyes grew luminous with feeling, her voice, wonderful as ever, thrilled in harmony to the melody, and music, her one great passion, absorbed her entirely to the forgetfulness of everything else. Her auditor started as the first full rich tones of that exquisite voice fell on his ear, and listened spellbound to the end, wonder and admiration visible on his face.

"Can it be possible that you have a voice like that and yet are unknown?" he exclaimed as she ceased singing. "Why, child, it would make you rich and famous in London."

A faint flush brightened Nelly's cheek as she heard his praises, and a new light shone in her eyes. Ambition, that had before lain dormant and unsuspected, awoke to be in-

cited to greater earnestness by the influence of the brilliant man of the world. For the first time, Elinor began to dream of fame and musical successes. From that day the baronet evinced the greatest interest in Nelly's talent, and he tested her voice thoroughly. He was himself no mean musician, and rightly judged of the sensation this beautiful young girl would create in the fashionable world of London, even with the culture she had already received, for, as I have said, Malcolm Keith had given his daughter the advantage of the best instruction in music, little thinking that he was thus preparing the way for a life at once brilliant and severe. Could he have foreseen the perilous height to which his lovely child would attain he would have trembled for the tender flower which had hitherto been so carefully sheltered. But the future is veiled from mortal eyes, and the web that fate was weaving progressed toward the end.

Well did the baronet understand how to paint glowing word-pictures that should excite the young girl's ambition and love of admiration, and he had a powerful auxiliery in her own sincere and passionate devotion to music. To be a great singer; to win the crown in that arena, seemed to Nelly the grandest of achievements, and she felt instinctively that she was born for it, and would wear her honors well.

The time drew near when Sir Edward was to depart for London, and he offered to introduce Elinor to her new life, and use his influence—which was considerable—in her favor. Once before the public, he knew she would need no further intercessor. After much indecision and many doubts, conquered by her ambition and the longing that grew upon her to break away from the monotonous life which she had lived, but which had become so dreary since her father's death. Elinor decided to leave her old home, perhaps forever, and go out to a new destiny. She informed Aunt Katy of her decision, to that worthy woman's astonishment and dismay, and ended by saying that if she would go with her she should be very glad, but if not some one else must take her place, and she could remain at the cottage. At this Aunt Katy burst into tears.

"Oh, child!" she cried, "you will break my heart. Do you think that if you were going to certain death I would not go with you? If you must take this step which is enough to make your poor father rise from his grave, of course I will stand by you and do you all the good I can, and it's need of it you'll have, I'm thinking. Will nothing change your mind?"

But no; Elinor was obstinately firm, and Aunt Katy packed the few necessaries for their journey with quivering hands and tear-filled eyes. Better than Nelly she realized the difficulties that lay before her beloved foster-child, while at the same time she felt that it would be useless to try to convince her of them.

"Time will tell! Time will tell!" she murmured; "and may God help me to shield my poor lamb from all harm. The pretty trusting darling."

If Sir Edward had hoped that some less devoted companion would take Aunt Katy's place, he did not betray the feeling; but appeared pleased with the arrangement. During the baronet's stay Robert Derrick had been seen at the house but very few times, and when he had called Elinor had been so monopolized by the stranger that she had hardly given him a word, and the haughty aristocrat had so completely ignored Robert that he felt his cheek redden with his rising anger and had quickly departed, bitterly regretting the evil chance that had sent the rich nobleman to their shores.

Now that Nelly was to go away, it might be never to return, Aunt Katy proposed that she should take a farewell of her two dearest friends, Agnes Lee and Robert Derrick, but to her surprise Elinor absolutely declined doing so, saying that she wished no one to know where she was going or what was her object. Fate, however, or circumstance, either that you like best to call it, ordered that she should not depart without once more holding a hand of each of her true friends.

It was the last evening before the young girl was to start on her journey and leave her childhood's home, which she was destined never again to enter with the same child's heart, that as yet she had preserved in all its freshness. Rosy clouds still floated in the blue western heavens, and a single star had blazed out in advance of all it's golden sisterhood, royal in it's beauty and first maid of honor to the moon. The sea was quiet and murmurously musical as upon that evening when we first beheld Elinor and her two friends. Nelly had gone out

for one last lonely stroll along the coast, one farewell visit, full of tender regret, to her father's grave. Kneeling there, and breathing a prayer for guidance in the new path before her, she caught the wondrous glow of the queen of all the stars, fair Venus, and murmured, "It is the star of Love and not of Fame, but may both be mine!"

Plucking one flower from the sod she passed slowly on, and when she again reached the cliffs was saluted by the voice of Agnes, who advanced toward her followed by Robert, whose cheeks flushed with a deeper hue while his large eyes betrayed a stronger feeling than his words expressed.

They little thought that it was the knowledge that this was their parting interview, perhaps for years, perhaps forever, which gave such an added warmth to Elinor's greeting, or caused her to grasp their hands with such clinging force. Robert was only too glad to meet her alone once more, for he felt an instinctive dislike for the handsome supercilious stranger, who evidently scorned to bandy words with Robert Derrick the fisherman's son.

Elinor had grown more like her old self (with a difference) in the past few weeks, for the whispers of ambition are inspiring, and she had not brooded so incessantly over her grief. Her cheeks bloomed with a brilliant color, her eyes shone like twin stars, and the perfect head with its coronal of waiving tresses no longer drooped like a broken lily, but was poised as gracefully as the same flower when it first opens in all its regal beauty. As she and Robert stood together, he with his noble Saxon face like a young sea-king of one of the old Norse legends, Agnes owned to her own gentle unselfish heart that they were well mated.

Long the two wandered by the sea, and at last, when they thought of turning their steps homeward, Robert begged for one song from Nelly before they should part. She, knowing that the parting was for longer time than he knew, did not refuse, but standing facing the sea, the moonlight falling full upon her lovely upturned brow, she sang as she had never sung before, and as, in after years, to the immense audiences who delighted to do her honor, she could not sing a song of farewell:—

"I hear the voice of the sea,
As it murmurs with ebb and swell,
It whispers one word to me:
'Farewell!'

"The wind sweeps by with a sigh,
And it sounds to me like a knell,
For a wailing voice doth cry
'Farewell!'

"I looked to a glowing star
And a fiery meteor fell;
As a voice said from afar—
'Farewell!'

"I gathered a blossom fair,
But too quickly the petals fell,
While floated on the air—
'Farewell!'

"I said, 'Is there naught on earth
That a sunnier fate will tell?
Must we say to all of worth
'Farewell!'

"Then I clasped a hand I knew,
With sorrow's rising swell,
As I breathed to one so true,
'Farewell!'

"But my soul, which had been sad
At the tale which all things tell,
Soared heavenward with one glad
'Farewell!'

The last notes died away on the air, but the spell which the melody had worked yet remained, and the three friends walked on as if in a dream. At Elinor's door there was a pressure of hands, a kiss from Agnes, and she and Robert turned toward their homes, while Nelly gazed after them, noting the kingly air of one, who, though only a fisherman's son; was evidently one of earth's noblemen. Looking back, they saw her standing there, and sent a last good-by.

In the morning Elinor was gone, the house was closed, and after a few days of wonderment the sudden departure ceased to be a subject of thought to any one except the two faithful friends who always cherished the hope of again meeting the wanderers. To Robert Derrick the blow was most grevious and unexpected, and he made many attempts to trace Elinor, but without success. Not knowing of her newly aroused musical ambition, which knowledge would have guided him, he was completely puzzled, but felt that Elinor's disappearance was somehow due to the influence of the stranger who had so long been an inmate of the cottage on the cliffs. He shut his teeth hard as he thought of this, and clenched his hands as if ready for a tilt against some imaginary antagonist. Sometimes he would wander in his lonely walk to the cottage once rendered so dear by the lovely presence of Elinor, and would be startled into a deeper sense of his own lone

liness as he was confronted by the closed shutters and general air of neglect. Then he would turn away, nearly wild with a desire to penetrate this mystery, reproaching Nelly mentally for thus deserting her friends without a word of explanation. But Nelly was gone.

CHAPTER II.

SIX years have passed away since last we visited the little fishing hamlet of N——, and yet it looks the same as in the past. The changes, if any there be, have been more in the lives of the people than in any outward things. Elinor's home still stands on the cliff, weather-beaten, and bearing traces of its unoccupied condition for so long a time, for Elinor had come to be forgotten, except by a very few.

One summer evening two young people walked slowly along the path nearest the sea, one slight and very frail, leaning upon the strong arm of the noble-looking man at her side. They are our old acquaintances, Robert and Agnes, but how different! The intervening years since last we saw them have given to Robert Derrick a manlier look, a perfection of all the grand forces, mental and physical, which his youth had indicated. He has not spent all these years in the quiet country, but is already a man noted among men for his genius as an engineer. The fine intellect that attracted the attention of Malcolm Keith so long ago has asserted its power, and fame and wealth have been the result.

With Agnes it was different, yet she, too, is changed. Gentle and lovely always, there is now an etheral look to her frame, a wonderful brightness in the soft blue eyes, an unwonted and rare scarlet on the cheeks. The small hand resting on Robert's arm is almost transparent in its thinness, and the slight cough that occasionally falls on the air tells of a danger too near. In all this time there had been no trace gained of Elinor, and it is of her they are speaking.

"It is strange, Robert," said Agnes, "that we should lose her so utterly. Oh, my dear Nelly! I do so wish to see her again before I die. No, do not shake your head so encouragingly, Robert; my fate is sealed, and it is better so. Believe me, I have no morbid fear of death, no reluctance to meet it when it comes, but I should be dull indeed if I did not understand the inevitable. I have a feeling, though I can give no reason for it, that if you should go to London you would meet Elinor and bring her to me."

"I fear it is only a fancy, Agnes, but I have business that calls me to London, and if it were not so I would certainly go to please you. I will start to-morrow if you desire it."

"Oh, yes, Robert!" she exclaimed, her face lighting up with hope. "Go as soon as you can, for I have not long," and she paused looking at him gratefully.

Robert turned away to hide his emotion, and no word was spoken as they went slowly homeward. They were the same true friends as of old, and Robert never guessed that Agnes had ever felt for him more than a sister's affection.

The bustle, and fog, and din of London. Among the many passers in the streets is one whom we know—Robert Derrick the young engineer. Overtaking a casual acquaintance who greeted him warmly, the two proceeded on their way together, talking on various subjects, till mention was made of the queen of opera, Beatrice Ronli. On this theme Robert's friend waxed enthusiastic, and then spoke of a distinguished artist, a mutual friend, who had just completed her portrait, advising Robert to go and see it in his studio. With this the two separated, and Robert, for want of anything else to do, strolled into several studios, among them the one his friend had spoken of. He had met the artist while traveling in Switzerland, and had been able to confer a favor upon him for which he seemed very grateful. This day he greeted Robert cordially, and after a few inquiries invited him into his inner studio, saying he would join him in a few moments. A portrait, partly veiled, attracted Robert's attention, and he lifted the curtain to stand transfixed with amazement. Beautiful indeed were those large soulful eyes, that white low brow, those sweet half-arch, half-sad lips, and the cheek like a blush rose. Lovely as a dream, but a dream that had once been tangible, for it was the face of a perfected Elinor!

One moment he stood motionless, in the transport of his own good fortune; the next, he turned impetuously to inquire for the original, whan lo! instead of his friend the painter, the figure seemed to have stepped

from the canvas and taken position behind him. There was one quick glance of mutual recognition, and of a feeling with which mere recognition had nothing to do, and then their hands met with the words:—

"Robert!"

"Nelly!"

In the joy of meeting he forgot her desertion and long silence, and only saw the love of his youth, none the less dear because that love had been unspoken. She flushed "rose red" under his delighted glances, and to all his inquiries replied:—

"Come and see me, and I will give you the history of my life since I saw you." Then she asked: "Have you heard Beatrice Ronli sing?"

"No," he replied; "but I have been told of her wonderful powers, and, indeed, her fame is world-wide. I came here to see her picture, when I discovered this one of you."

"Will you grant me a favor?" Then reading assent in his face she added: "Go and here her to-night, and do not think me cold that I do not say 'come and see me' instead. I shall be at the opera and will see you there. Now I must say good-by. Do not leave the theatre without speaking to me, and to-morrow you must come and see me and tell me all about my dear Agnes. *Au revoir!*" And with a pressure of the hand she was gone.

Robert soon followed, and went to his hotel filled with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure, for he was yet puzzled, and till the mystery should be explained, questions would arise in his mind. But he put aside all this, and the evening found him on his way to the opera.

The audience was of even unusual splendor, and the light was reflected flashingly from the gems that decked the brows, necks and arms of the beauty and fashion of the great city. Expectation was at its height, for the beautiful prima donna had excited the greatest *furore* among all music lovers, and those who could not appreciate yet applauded because it was the fashion. Robert Derrick gazed eagerly about him in search of Elinor, but she was nowhere to be seen, and he waited listlessly for the rising of the curtain.

At last the moment came, and a beautiful vision greeted his eyes, while thunders of applause filled the air. Spellbound, he gazed at the lovely singer, bowing her thanks so gracefully, for in the exquisite spirituelle beauty of that face he saw the vision of the morning. She sang, and the voice, improved somewhat by study, was yet the same that had so charmed him while breathing its last—"Farewell." The mystery was solved, and he mentally accused himself of stupidity for not reading the riddle before. Agnes was right; he had, indeed, found Elinor. Yet such is the perversity of the human heart, that, had he not been bound by a promise to the fading Agnes, he would have left London without a second interview; for, he argued, had she not cast them off? and was she not in all probability satisfied with her great success? Beatrice Ronli, the brilliant and admired prima donna, was less dear to him, he fancied, that the sweet Nelly of old. Besides, had she not let all these years pass without sign or token of remembrance of her early friends? But the delicate face of Agnes rose reproachfully before him, and the thought of her disappointment decided him to conquer his pride and deliver the message from her to Elinor. That there was a personal wish under it all he would not acknowledge to himself for a moment. So he sat and was charmed and thrilled in spite of himself, and pleased, too, at the superb triumph of the singer. At the close, he made his way behind the scene and waited where he knew Elinor must pass. Soon he saw her advancing, but not alone; with-drawing into the shadow he awaited her approach. The gentleman by her side looked familiar in the distance, and as he drew nearer, displayed the never-to-be-forgotten form and features of Sir Edward Morton.

A pang of jealousy keen as a dagger wrung the heart of Robert Derrick. Elinor was evidently deeply excited. Her eyes were flashing with indignation, her lips quivering with scorn. Her subdued but contemptuous tones reached the ears of the unseen listener.

"Sir Edward Morton, you call yourself a nobleman, and yet you are so unmanly as to take advantage of the fact that I am unattended to-night, to force your hateful attentions upon me. If you had the least spark of generosity in your nature, you would leave me as I request. But I will not endure this. I have a friend, and I will appeal to him to protect me."

"Don't get excited, my pretty songstress, though your anger only makes you so much the more beautiful, and therefore I excuse

it. It is useless, *mon amie Beatrice*, for you to think to escape me, and your resistance only makes me more determined to win you for my own. It is not so hard a destiny; many a lady of noble birth would not scorn to become Lady Morton, and all my possessions I lay at your feet. Oh, my haughty little queen! you may toss your handsome head as proudly as you please; you are in my power, and I will not give you up. Have I not helped you to all this grand career? Would you have ever left the dingy hamlet of N—— if I had not aroused your ambition? As for this friend you speak of, doubtless he is more powerful than the king himself—perhaps it is even the high and mighty young fisherman who dared to lift his plebeian eyes to you in such evident admiration;" and a sneering laugh sounded on Robert's ear. He restrained himself with difficulty from springing upon the insolent nobleman, and followed the two silently.

Without deigning to answer, Elinor swept on to the door where a carriage awaited her. Refusing Sir Edward's outstretched hand, she sprang in, when, with a mocking laugh and a gesture to the driver, Sir Edward was about to step in after her, exclaiming:—

"Now I have you, my pretty bird! This is my coachman, not yours!"

But the words had no sooner left his lips than a powerful hand hurled him aside with so much force that he reeled and fell stunned upon the pavement. The coachman sprang from the box with an oath, but Robert (for the new-comer was he) was too quick for him, and dealing him a blow that rendered him powerless for a time, he mounted to the driver's seat himself and said to Elinor:—

"Do not be alarmed, but tell me where you wish to go."

She gave him her address, and soon they arrived at the hotel where Beatrice Ronli, the prima donna, had taken apartments. What need to tell the joy and gratitude of Elinor, or the still deeper delight of Robert, who had that night heard words which convinced him that Sir Edward Morton was not the possessor of Elinor's heart. Aunt Katy, her hair a little more silvery and her face pale from recent illness, greeted him with unconcealed pleasure, and explained the reason for Elinor's lack of a companion that night. The faithful woman had been ill, and Nelly, seeing her feebleness, had declared that there was not the least need of her attendance—she would have a carriage at the door, and come alone without any trouble; so she insisted that Aunt Katy should remain quietly at home.

There were long explanations that night, and Elinor told how she had come to the great metropolis bearing a letter from Sir Edward Morton to a distinguished musical director, who immediately became interested in her, realizing the wonderful quality of her voice; how she had at first devoted herself chiefly to study, and then had departed to travel in foreign countries where she shone in concert room and opera. Finally she had returned to England and became the unwilling recipient of the marked attentions of Sir Edward Morton, who appeared to consider her his own by right of their early connection. Hitherto Elinor had succeeded in evading him, but this night he had apparently a deep laid plan to gain by force what he could not obtain by soft speeches and costly gifts. Elinor shuddered as she realized his unscrupulousness, and glanced gratefully at Robert whose strong arm had so well defended her.

"And why have you never shown by word or sign that you had not forgotten your old friends?" asked Robert at last.

"At first I was too proud, and would not write until my success was assured, and afterward I wrote and received no answer, so that I imagined you had forgotten me and did not care to know of my fate. But lately my heart has yearned for the old home and the old faces more than ever. For a long time I looked upon Sir Edward Morton as a kind and disinterested friend, and it was to him that I entrusted the letter directed to you, after I had written to Agnes without result. Can it be possible that he destroyed it? You remember that he took a son of one of the villagers away in place of his one servant, who was drowned, and it was through this man, that I learned of your happy marriage. It is late for congratulations, but mine are most sincere. Agnes is the sweetest of girls."

"Agnes? My marriage?" ejaculated Robert. "What can you mean? I am not married, nor is Agnes."

"Then it is false! another of the base deceptions of which I have been the dupe!" she ceased speaking suddenly, blushing crimson beneath his earnest glance. Then hastily added: "My dear Agnes! how much joy it would give me to see her!"

Thus reminded of his mission, Robert told with subdued tone, of how like a faded lily Agnes had grown, and how she longed to see once more the cherished friend of olden times. Elinor heard with many tears, and determined to hasten to the dying girl.

It was sunset, and the crimson light streamed over the water with a glow of inexpressible beauty. Agnes, with face white as her pillows, save where the hectic flush had not yet faded quite away, looked out upon the ocean-realizing that it was her farewelll gaze. Yes the earth with all its glorious tints of sunrise and sunset, its summer verdure, and sweet broideries of blossoms, would henceforth only give her a resting-place upon its bosom—and she was content. The two who were dearest to her of all the world watched beside her, and her heart was at rest. Her breath grew very faint as the sunset glow waxed paler, and reaching out one thin white hand she took Elinor's, warm living and pink-lined, and placed it in the stronger clasp of Robert, laying her own lightly above them.

"You two will be happy, and it is right. May Heaven bless you!" Then she whispered: "Sing, dear Nelly!"

In a voice half-choked, at times, with an emotion repressed for the sake of the dying girl, Elinor sang the beautiful lines commencing:—

"Beyond these chilly winds and gloomy skies.
Beyond death's cloudy portal,
There is a land where beauty never dies
And love becomes immortal."

The sweet strain ceased, and all was still; Elinor's kiss was pressed upon a marble-like cheek. The feet of Agnes already trod the beautiful shore of the Hereafter.

One more picture and I have done. An ocean steamer is receiving its complement of passengers, and on deck, a little aside from all the rest, stand two who look upon the scene around them a moment, and then, with a happy smile, into each other's eyes and seem content.

Among those who have come to say farewell to the gay party of tourists, is one in whom the two cannot be mistaken. The recognition is mutual, and a flash of baffled hatred lights the eyes of Sir Edward Morton as he turns on his heel, glad to escape from the view of happiness which he had tried so unsuccessfully to prevent. The sun is bright, the sea is calm, and life is very very sweet to Robert and Elinor Derrick, who have set their faces toward the orange groves and sunny skies of Italy the Fair.

WAIT AWHILE.

WHEN life's sky is overclouded
Dark with heavy hours of care,
And each view with gloom seems shrouded,
Look around you—don't despair!
You shall yet see these dissever,
See once more the sunbeams smile,
Patience perfect work has ever;
Wait awhile;

If some wrong or grievance clearly.
Should from as demand redress,
Let us not, through anger merely,
Yield to passion's rash excess.
Hasty words have often brought us
After-days of bitter trial,
And this maxim wise have taught us—
Wait awhile!

Don't when idle tongues are telling
Rumors false for ought you know.
Be too quick to aid them, swelling
Scandalous reports that grow,
Oft through slander's heartlessness
Virtue's self is counted vile,
Better give each one a hearing—
Wait awhile!

Shun contention. All our pleasures
Flee when angry passions rise!
Wisdom counsels prudent measures,
Calm debate alone is wise,
Oh, how many times exempted
We might be from sorrow's trial,
If we would, when rashly tempted,
Wait awhile!

ADVENTURE WITH WOLVES.

FIFTY years ago the country then known as Canada East was very sparely settled, especially that portion lying east of the St. Francis River and bordering on Maine. The animal known commonly as the Canadian gray wolf was then the scourge of the entire country. They often gathered in multitudes apparently under the guidance of an acknowledged leader, and attacked whatever they could find. Not only sheep and small animals were slaughtered, but horned cattle, horses, and even human beings fell a prey to these blood-thirsty scourges.

The wolf is scarcely ever known to attack any creature except some of the smaller species, singly, as he has ever been noted for his cowardice, but when pressed by hunger and an available opportunity for securing a good round meal is discovered by the leader of the pack, he at once begins to howl. This is understood and answered by others, until in an incredible short time, they are all assembled, when, under the guidance of the leader, they dash off. Then whatever happens to be the object of pursuit is generally doomed to destruction.

The leader, when he becomes feeble by reason of age or wounds, is generally vanquished in an encounter with some younger and more vigirous male, and then set upon by the entire pack and driven out to die alone.

In the autumn of the year 1832, near the close of a bright day, a traveler alighted at a little wayside inn situated on the borders of one of those Canadian forests, known as the crown lands, and called for luncheon and a feed for his horse. He was a powerfully built man of fine personal appearance, in the prime of life, and evidently one who had seen much of the world. The horse he rode, whose symmetrical form, finely shaped head and lofty mein plainly indicated his careful breeding, was unsaddled, neatly groomed and put in the stable.

A frugal meal of deer steak, potatoes, buckwheat griddle cakes and maple honey was soon set before the traveler to which he did ample justice. To this was added a tumbler and small decanter of whiskey, as at that day a drink of some kind of liquor, especially among gentry and travelers at least, before each meal, was not only considered respectable, but almost indispensable. Of the latter, however, the guest declined to partake, remarking that he had never yet tasted liquor of any kind, and hadn't the least desire to commence now. In reply to interrogatories he stated that he was agent of a large publishing house in Philadelphia, and bound to Quebec; that he must hasten, as he wished to pass the woods that night.

"Pass the woods to-night!" exclaimed the landlord in surprise. "Indeed, you must do no such thing. The woods are filled with wolves, and they are uncommonly fierce. If you encounter a pack, as no doubt you will, your life must pay the forfeit; so please stay where you are—I beg you will not hazzard your life in this reckless manner."

The traveler, thinking that his host was over anxious, began to suspect danger from another source, as he carried a large sum of money. The more he pondered the firmer became his conviction that mischief was meant, and the story of the wolves one of their inventions to suit the occasion and their own wicked purpose. Furthermore, knowing the moon to be near the full and a smooth road before him, besides being mounted well, he anticipated nothing but a pleasant ride. Bidding his host a hearty good-by, he rode away and was soon lost to sight in the distant forest. Nothing of interest occured to disturb the monotony of his journey until several miles or perhaps more than half the journey had been passed, when he descried a dark object at a short distance ahead, which he at first took for some stray dog. The creature trotted along for some distance in a leisurely manner, occasionally casting a backward glance at the horse and rider, then with a sudden bound disappeared in the forest. But a few moments intervened when at a short distance to his right he heard the prolonged howl of a wolf. This was immediately answered by another at his left and then another and another in different directions, till the forest seemed alive with them.

The horse, as though apprehending danger, pricked up his ears and quickened his pace, the howls still continuing and apparently

coming nearer each other, all in his rear. The traveler heartily wished he had heeded the advice of the landlord, which too late he discovered was kindly given. Soon that frightful and ominous cry known as the chase war hoop sounded through the forest, enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart.

Casting a hasty glance back he discovered the whole pack in full chase. The horse now began to run at the top of his speed, but his master saw he was no match for the wolves, encumbered as he was with a weight of at least two hundred pounds. Drawing one of his pistols as they appeared he fired a random shot into the pack. A short yelp told that his shot had taken effect, causing a halt.

The entire pack pounced upon their companion, devouring him piecemeal. Meanwhile our hero made the most of his time, cheering his now frantic horse till he almost seemed to fly. But this availed little, as he was soon overtaken. The wolves, completely maddened by the taste of blood, now became more fierce than before. He then fired his remaining pistol, which wounded another of their number, which was disposed of in the same manner as the first. Could he but have maintained a running fight in this manner by reloading he could possibly have gained the open country, but this was before the days of revolvers, repeating rifles and breech-loaders. Besides, in his agitation, thinking his pistols was of no further use after being discharged, he threw them away.

What to do was now a hard question. Both pistols gone, the wolves all around him, miles from the open country or any shelter or habitation. The noble horse now began to pant for breath, and, as he imagined to falter in his gait. The wolves were on either side of him, snapping at his legs and the flanks of his horse. Knowing that he couldn't hold out much longer at this rate of speed, he, in his affection for his faithful steed, was half inclined to sever the girths of his saddle, throw himself to the wolves, and give his companion a chance for his life. Patting his arched neck he said:—

"Poor Pompey! I fear they will pick your bones to-night!"

The wolves had now got in front of the horse, some jumping for his nose and throat, while others were trying to seize him by the hamstring, their fiery eyes flashing, and their fangs glistening in the moonlight.

He was about to give up in despair, when, like an electric shock, came the thought to his mind—his snuff-box! To think was to act. Being an inveterate snuff-taker, and quite an epicure in that way, he had taken the precaution before leaving home to provide himself with a package of prime old Maccaboy. Seizing his saddle bags, he tore them open, crushed the package at one grasp and cast the contents in their upturned faces.

The scene that followed beggars description. All the fiends of the infernal regions let loose could never more than equal it. A momentary silence, and then with an unearthly cry of rage and pain they abandoned their object of pursuit, and pitching into each other commenced fighting and tearing in the most horrid manner.

The horse continued his flight, soon arriving at a farm house, where every attention was paid to him and his rider that kindness and their limited means could furnish.

The next day, as his horse seemed somewhat jaded, he concluded to stop a few days and recruit; also try to recover his money, pistols and papers. Accompanied by two of the neighbors he returned to the scene of his adventure. His property was found where he had dropped it, but the scene of the conflict was sickening; by counting tails, ears and feet, they judged that more than twenty wolves were killed and eaten by their comrades. The wolves soon disappeared from the forest never to return, except now and then a straggler.

WHEN the world first out of chaos sprang,
So smiled the days, and so the tenor ran
Of their felicity; a Spring was there,
An everlasting Spring the jolly year
Led round in his great circle; no wind's breath
As now, did smell of Winter and of Death.—CRASHAW.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS' STORY-TELLER.

JACK'S TRIALS.

By Elizabeth Bigelow.

JACK rushed to the door when he heard the postman's ring on St. Valentine's Day. Valentines had not gone out of fashion in N——, and Jack received four large square envelopes from the postman's hand. They were all for his Sister Bess, of course, thought Jack— girls always got all the valentines; but no! one of the envelopes is directed unmistakably to "Master Jack Northrup."

A vision of Cupids and roses and sweet little mottoes on white satin flits before Jack's delighted eyes; the little girl around the corner, with the blue eyes and yellow curls, must have sent it!

Jack tares it open, after trying once more to guess whether it has a verse or only a motto upon it, and sees—oh, horrors!—a dreadful comic valentine. A boy, dressed in soldier's clothes, and blowing on a trumpet, is represented upon it; he has a cap upon his head, which look more like a dunce-cap than a soldier's cap, and he is puffed out all over like a balloon. (Jack is pretty fat, and it is a decided mortification to him.)

The boy is a very ugly boy indeed; he has an immense head, and a nose like a crooked-neck squash, but Jack cannot help thinking that it looks like him! He has epaulettes on his shoulders, almost exactly like those which Jack wears as captain of "Company Six." The trumpet on which he is blowing bears a striking resemblance—or at least Jack thinks it does—to the fish-horn with which Jack leads Company Six on to glory. The boy's hair is very curly. Alas! neither combing nor wetting nor cutting will take the curl out of Jack's hair, which is so unbecoming to a military man, and which brings upon him the almost unendurable disgrace of being called "Sissy Northrup" by the boys! Having fully inspected the boy, Jack turns the page, and reads the following verses:—

"I am Captain Jack, of Company Six;
I keep my men in a dreadful fix;
I get at school most awful licks,
Because I am a dunce, sir!

"I am Captain Jack, of the horn and drum:
I blow my horn and I make it hum;
You'd better believe that I am some,—
For I think so myself, sir!

"I am Captain Jack, so fat and gay;
I curl my hair up every day,
And with the girls I love to play,
Because I'm 'Sissy,' too, sir!"

If the boy on the outside of the valentine had made Jack angry, how did he feel when he read those verses! He wanted to keep it to himself; he did not like to have other people see it, but his wrath was to great. He rushed into the room where the family were still at breakfast, with his face very red, and his fist "doubled up."

"I say, Uncle Dick, will you help me pay him off? Will Seaver, that sent me this. I'd punch his head for him, only he's bigger than me!"

"Jack! Jack!" said his mother, reprovingly.

"Well, mamma, can a fellow stand that?"

Even Bess forsook her valentines to look at Jack's and there was a laugh all round the table while Uncle Dick read the verses aloud.

"Why, that is only a joke, Jack! I wouldn't take it so hard," said his father.

And Uncle Dick, who was very full of fun, wouldn't stop laughing, and that made Jack's angry passions rise higher and higher.

"Well, I do think it is pretty mean!" said Bess, coming over to Jacks side. "To have fat and curly-haired and everything that Jack hates in it!"

"How do you know that Will Seaver sent it?" asked Uncle Dick.

Jack thought he did because he had "got above Will in spelling the day before, and that always made Will mad, because he thought he could spell everybody out of sight."

"I'll tell you one thing I am going to do to pay him," said Jack. "You know he smoked a cigar the other day, and it made him so sick, he was absent from school two days, and the boys have teased him so that he is mad if anybody says cigar to him!

Now I am going to school awful early this noon, and make a snow-man in the school-yard, with a big cigar in his mouth, and put a placard on it with Will's name printed on it in such awful big letters that you can see it from the street! Won't he feel cheap, though!"

"I guess it won't stay there long after Will gets there!" said Bess. "And I think may be you'll wish you hadn't put it there!"

"I think Will Seaver is a pretty good boy. I wouldn't quarrel with him, if I were you, Jack!" said Uncle Dick.

"Oh, that's just because you like Rose Seaver! But that ain't any go! Didn't I hear her talking about you with Miss Jenkins, one day when I was in there? and didn't she say she thought you were a flirt, and she didn't like a man who was a flirt? And Miss Jenkins said you weren't a marrying man—and I shouldn't think you were, when you never got married once!—and she said you were an old bachelor, most thirty-five—and didn't Rose ever notice the bald spot coming on your head?—and your intentions didn't mean serious to anybody! And Rose got as red as fire, and said she never thought they did!"

Everybody laughed at Jack's frankness, and his mother reproved him for repeating remarks that he heard about people, and Uncle Dick's face grew as red as Rose Seaver's could have done.

Jack grew silent and very reserved on the subject of his valentine after that, and when breakfast was over, he drew Bess off for a little confidential interview.

"Bess, I have got a suspicion!" said he, loftily.

"Good gracious! Does it hurt you? How does it make you feel?" said Bess. (She would tease Jack when he put on airs and used big words.)

"It makes me feel like punching Uncle Dick's head!" (Jack wasn't so fierce as one would think from his talk. When he was excited he would use some slang, in spite of his mother.)

"Why Uncle Dick's?" asked Bess.

"Because I believe he sent me that valentine! Those verses sound just like him! And he is always up to something, you know!"

"I think Uncle Dick would have written better verses! But then, I don't know," said Bess, meditatively; "he didn't seem to want you to pay Will Seaver for it!"

"I'm sure he sent it!" said Jack decidedly. "And, oh! if I don't think up some way to be even with him! I'm going to ask Rob Ingalls to help me!"

Rob Ingalls was Jack's particular friend, and could generally be relied upon to exercise all his ability in the line of mischief.

Being taken into Jack's confidence, and shown the valentine on solemn promise of secrecy, Rob, after duly weighing the probabilities of the case, with a very solemn countenance, declared it to be his opinion of the unseemly jest. But still, as it might possibly have been Will Seaver, they might as well make the snow image, with a cigar in his mouth, which Jack had proposed, and make it to look as much like Will as possible, as well as having his name on it.

A prank like that suited Rob exactly.

So each of the boys ate a hurried lunch that day, and rushed back to the school-yard. With all their efforts, the snow image did not strikingly resemble Will Seaver. I do not think the point of the joke would have been seen if they had not fastened a large piece of pasteboard, with Will Seaver's name upon it, on the snow-man's hat. The cigar in the image's mouth was a real one, of very large size, on which Jack and Rob Ingalls had spent all their spare change.

Cigars were a very delicate point to Will Seaver, and he thought that was a very mean joke indeed. Bess's prediction that it would not stay there long after Will got there proved correct. Will and one or two of his friends, who agreed with him that it was a very mean joke, "pitched into" the snow image with feet and fists, and demolished it in a very short time. Jack and Rob Ingalls went to the rescue of their precious cigar, with which they hoped to have a great deal more fun still, and in the *melee* it was throw, together with a very large snowball, full in the face of the principal of the school, who was just coming into the yard!

After that Will Seaver was not the only boy to whom cigars were a delicate point!

Will Seaver devoted himself to thinking up a plan to make him even with Jack and Rob, while Jack tried to pay off Uncle Dick, whom he still believe to be the sender of the valentine.

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do Rob!" he said, after rejecting, one by one, Rob's suggestions, such as putting rocks in Uncle Dick's bed, sewing up his coat sleeves, and other such common devises to annoy and

enrage a victim. "I want to do something uncommon, and which will tease him awfully, you know! Because there never was anything in the world so mean as that valentine! I guess he'll never want to call me fat or curly-headed again!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Rob, impatiently.

"Well, you know Uncle Dick likes the girls an awful lot. But he just likes to be flirting round with them, and he doesn't want to marry any of them. I heard mamma say the other day that she didn't think he would marry for the world. Now I am going to make him get married! If that's what he hates most of anything, that's what I'll make him do!"

"I don't see how a feller is going to work to make his uncle get married!" said Rob. He thought he could invent tricks to play on people as well as any other "feller," but this was going beyond him.

Jack chuckled over his own smartness.

"Well, now you see if I don't make Uncle Dick get married! You know Will Seaver's Sister Rose? Well, Uncle Dick flirts with her, and I think, by the way she blushed about him the other day, that she is awful sweet on him. And I am going to write a letter to her saying I am awful sweet on her, and ask her to marry me!"

"You?" demanded Rob, aghast. "You don't suppose"——

"Rob Ingalls, I thought you had a little sense! I shall sign Uncle Dick's name to it, of course. And she will answer it, and say 'yes,' I am sure; and he will get the answer, and what can he do? He won't tell her he didn't ask her! He is politer than that! He'll have to marry her!"

"But if you should get found out, wouldn't you catch it!" said Rob, who was somewhat alarmed at the greatness of the undertaking.

"I ain't going to get found out!" said Jack; though he did wonder if it were a State's Prison offence which he proposed to commit. "You can write it for me, so if Uncle Dick ever sees it, he will know that it isn't mine, and I can say I didn't write it, if I'm asked, and you know I wouldn't tell on you, whatever happened."

Rob did have perfect confidence that Jack would not "tell on him," and agreed to write the letter. Jack got a scrap of Uncle Dick's handwriting, that Rob might imitate it as closely as possible, and composed the letter himself. (Spelling was not a strong point with either Jack or Rob.) It read thus:—

"Deer miss Rose you must hav sene for a grate wile that i was sweet on you. i hav not edzacktly bin your bo becus i hav bin bo too a grate menny gurls but it was only to conseal my fealings for you i luv you will you bee my wife. pleas anser sune or i shall dy. "RICHARD S. EATON."

"Now that is just exactly what Uncle Dick would write! I know, because he never writes a great long letter. And she'll write back that she will be his wife, and what can he do?"

And Jack executed a kind of Indian war-dance in his delight at his own wit, and the probable success of his trick, which would amply avenge the insult offered him by that comic valentine.

He despatched the letter, and awaited the result with great anxiety.

The very next evening Uncle Dick went out, without saying where he was going. And that usually meant that he was going to call on some young lady. Jack thought it was probably Miss Rose Seaver, and decided to sit up until he returned, and see whether he looked disturbed and unhappy.

It was late—after eleven o'clock—when he came home, but Jack had been allowed as an extraordinary privilege, to sit up. The rest of the family had retired.

When Uncle Dick came in, he looked disturbed, as if something had happened, certainly, but never had he looked happier, smiled more beamingly!

"Jack, O Jack, what a boy you are! I owe you one, and one that I'll be most happy to pay!"

Jack got up, with a feeling as if the end of the world was coming, and a very shaky sensation in his legs.

"For you've done me the best turn that I ever had done me in my life! But to have you propose to a young lady for me is an honor that I never expected! You see I had been trying to get up courage to propose to her for a long time—you'll know more about it by the time you make your second proposal, probably—ha, ha!—and couldn't do it. She showed me this," holding out the letter, "thinking that perhaps I could guess who sent it. You see, Jack, spelling and composition and all, it was too strong an

effort of genuis for her to think I was the author! and that broke the ice for me, and she's going to be my wife next summer! What do you think of that Master Jack?"

"I—I thought you didn't want to marry anybody!" stammered Jack. "Mamma said you wouldn't marry anybody for the world!"

"Mamma, it seems, didn't know much about it!" laughed Uncle Dick. "But if you thought that, what made you write that letter?"

"To pay you for the valentine!"

"The valentine! Why I didn't send it!"

"You didn't?" said Jack, very crestfallen. "Who did, then?"

"Well, since you have done me such a very great kindness, I'll tell you that I strongly suspect it was Bess."

"And she looked so innocent about it! I didn't once think of it! Well, I'll never believe in a girl again!"

Jack hasn't "got even" with Bess yet, having met with such failures in paying off two who were not guilty, he has lost heart, and so far let the guilty one go unpunished.

And when he teases Bess, she can always stop him by singing:—

"I'm Captain Jack, so fat and gay;
I curl my hair up every day,
And with the girls I love to play,
Because I'm 'Sissy,' too, sir!"

BASCOMB'S BOY BILL.

By Tony.

HAS anybody's orchard been robbed? Has some angular maiden lady of precarious age mourned the loss of a pet feline animal? Has anyone's slate been broken, pencils changed at school? In fact, has anything unusual happened, to disturb the quiet ways and monotonous routine of life at Northville? If so, make up your mind at first, that Bascomb's boy Bill is at the bottom of the disturbance.

Bill's life from babyhood up to the period at which we now introduce him to the public—namely, fifteen—has been one long array of mishaps. Bascomb often remarked the highly interesting fact, that his child's sex was indeed a great mistake. Mrs. Bascomb at the same time congratulated herself on the point of this same mistake, for if Billy had been a Susie, a Sallie or a Fannie, how that girl's doings would have shocked the good people indeed. Mrs. Bascomb was never noticed for her farsight, consequently she did not take into consideration the very present question of sex, and its different action upon the person particularly interested.

William Henry Harrison Bascomb, our hero, generally called Boy Bill, is not an evil-looking youngster, indeed if you are a stranger to him, and should meet him on the street this very minute, you would at sight, put him down as the model prize boy of his class, one of those really quite fellows who profess to spend the Sabbath hour in its ordinary place of worship, rather than fish for shiners with a fine hook down under the willows.

Now Bill is a very different sort of a personage from this; he stands at the foot of his class, and only goes to Sabbath School when Bascomb leads him to the very church door.

Bill has got the bluest eyes you ever gazed into; his hair is of that soft yellowish brown, which so often marks the "good boy," his figure is slim and erect, and his face looks the very soul of perfect propriety.

Name Bascomb's boy Bill as the scapegrace of Northville and you place him at once. Call him a model of correct propriety, and you flatter him beyond all possible bounds of reason.

And yet, this same good-for-nothing figured prominently in a little transaction last summer, which, for the time being, raised high hopes within the parent breast, only to flicker there for a short spell, and then go back to the despairing, restless feeling of doubtful security for Bill's future success.

It was a high old time the boys were having, that afternoon on the public square. The Tiffers of Fonda were there to cross bats with the Beavers of Northville. Bill was catcher for the home club; now if there

was one thing he could do better than others, it was to stand bravely behind the dangerous bat and take the foul tips. He was great on that; so the home players said, and it must have been so, for the Tiffers were falling into line in one-two-three order, under those invincible foul tips, each and every one of which found a secure resting place in Bill's hands, counting an out for the rivals of Northville. Dell Buddle is twisting the ball vigirously at the pitcher's position, previous to one of his effective deliveries. Bill is bent partly over; eyes sharp, teeth clenched, and hands outstretched to receive the "hot one."

Dell draws back his arm, there—

A yelling of voices from the spectators, a hurrying of men and boys toward the road skirting the square.

There flying down the edge of the green comes the mill team. Heads tossed in air, foam-covered breasts—heavens! how they run. A little red object bouncing up and down upon the box boards of the heavy wagon meets the gaze of the startled spectators—Bessie, the little four-year-old daughter of Lansing, the proprietor of the mill.

There is possible death for the little one, unless there is some one among the crowd who is strong enough, ay, brave enough, to risk limb and life to stop the madly rushing horses. Ere the frightened ones there upon the square can fully realize the situation, Bascomb's boy Bill shows himself the one man, or boy rather, for the occasion.

Dashing out into the middle of the road, with mind determined, eyes like sparks, and face white, he awaits the result. The team increases its speed as it nears the lad, seeming to scorn this puny gnat in its way, whom it will, if possible crush.

A scurry of dust, a rattle of wheels, a fierce yell from Bill as he springs high in air, and alights square upon the back of the off horse. A tugging at the bit, a sharp pull to the right, and Bessie is saved.

The men grab the panting horses by the bits, and Bascomb's boy Bill glides from his perch in a dead faint.

So very quiet he lies there upon the grass with his pale face pillowed upon Dell Duddle's arm—surely he is dead. Dell thinks so, for he bursts out:—

"Say, you consarned blubber-heads, do you wan't Bill to die? Stand back, give him air, an' say, why 'n thunder don't some of you fetch some water?"

"There, that'll bring him to," said Footer, the catcher of the Tiffers; all rivalry has vanished now, and there is only compassionate anxiety in Footer's breast for the pale lad upon the grass. The water produced the effect, for Bill slowly opened his eyes, gasping for breath.

He looked quickly about him.

"What 'n thunder 's this 'bout, fellers? Did I get a hot one on the nose? No—oh! Yes, them horses. Is Bess safe?"

"Safe? yes, Billy boy, you done the purty thing that time, you did." This from one of the bystanders brightened the half-dazed senses entirely.

"Come, Dell, give me a hoist, I feel kinder weak in the knees. Come, fellers, let's finish the game."

"No more game to-day, boy," said the rival catcher Footer, "you've shown us all the games we want for one day, here's my hand-shake."

The rivals shook hands. "Now, fellers, three cheers and a tiger for Bill the Braver catcher, an' a bully brave one too. Hip, hip!"

Three cheers were given with good hearty will, not alone by the ball-players, but by the spectators as well. This ended the game.

Bill puts on his coat after saying good-by to the Fonda boys, and walks off toward home.

"Bully boy, he called me. Yes, that's it, Bill, only a bully boy, after all. I wonder why I can't be a good boy? Everything I do turns out for the bad. I don't like books, I hate examples, and I like ball-playing better 'n 'rithmetic. I wonder was dad another such a 'bully boy' as I am when he was a youngster? Bully boy! nice thing for me to tell mother; an' she'll want to know all 'bout circus."

Thus the perplexed lad mused as he went on his way homeward. Perhaps, for the very first time in his life, he was fully awakened to the fact of his being only a "bully boy." Bully boy, according to the school-ground vocabulry, expresses downright praise, though very slangy in its sounding, withal earnest, instead of delicate.

Billy had been often called a "bully boy," for certain dare-devil escapades in the mountains, climbing of steep walls, and the like. To-day he was a hero, he cast himself right into the jaws of death to save a human life, and—he's a bully boy for it, just the same as for all the rest.

His father glowed with well-felt pride, as he greeted Billy that evening; he had heard a full account of the affair down town.

"So you have gone into the hero business on a big scale, Billy, it'll be in print to-morrow."

"Don't want 'em to bother 'bout it at all," returned Bill, turning from the supper-table.

"Come, come, Billy, you have not done anything to be ashamed of, rather on the contrary you have proved yourself to be"——

"A bully boy," interrupted Bill. "That is what the rest said."

"Well, yes, as the term implies. But you have shown the world to-day that you have got the right material in you; by bringing the metal to the surface, my son, you can polish it in such a manner as shall reflect much credit on your part."

"Now, father, supposin' I should show all the folks here just what was in me, why they'll say 'Bill Bascomb has gone and turned sheep all at once.'"

"No, no, William; and if some should apply that term, which I doubt, it need not turn you from the right path."

Bill hung his head down, suddenly finding something very interesting in the door-knob which he was twisting about in his hand.

"William, tell me pray, is it not worth your time and trouble to bring out the good metal? I know you can give your mother and myself much cause for rejoicing, if you'll only do the right thing."

"Well, I'll try, father. Yes, I'll try ever so hard. But I'm afraid it'll only be 'bully boy' in the end, after all."

The lad went to his room. That night when he laid his head upon the pillow his mind was very busy with the new project. In what way shall he begin to be good? Go to school more regular? Attend Sabbath School? Drop those sly little smokes down in the cave? Yes, all those and many other petty affairs, which must necessarily produce their positive results.

How did Billy's new role work, think you? Hard, very hard, and he failed time after time.

He dropped back after a weeks time into the same old channels. He, like many an older one, gave up the battle before the powder was burned.

Life went on pretty much as usual with the Northvillers; and nothing of importance arose upon the current to disturb the regular easy-flowing stream of every-day trafficking.

Christmas-Eve! How the bells jingle! how the ice flies from the finely tempered steel of the skaters! There is a large crowd of them upon the pond below the bridge, and where the sport is the merriest, there is Bascomb's boy Bill.

The little town is full of joyous greetings from lip and hand and eye this crisp eve. Parties of young people coming from the church, where they have been engaged in decorating the walls for to morrow night's service, are flocking through the streets. A large crowd has gathered upon the bridge overlooking the dam. Lights have been placed about the pond, and the faces of the skaters below are plainly recognized. Two forms, a boy and a girl, are whirling along the north bank, Belle Carter and Billy.

Belle has dared Billy to tag her, and away the swift pair fly. Belle is a splendid skater, and Billy has not yet been successful in his chase.

She dashes under the bridge, and before Bill's sharp clear tones, "Look out, Belle! the hole," reaches her ears, the ice bends, cracks into pieces, and the girl's white hood disappears into the black water.

A loud cry for help from Billy's tongue startles the skaters from their sporting, and fills the ears of all with a terrible meaning. Some one has presence of mind enough to turn the reflecting light upon the dark place under the bridge. The water is quite deep in this particular spot. If the current should carry Belle under the ice! this flashed through Bill's mind like lightning.

The people on the bridge bend over the parapet; a hundred voices gives as many different commands, and Bill the scapegrace is the only one among the crowd who proves himself to be the man for the emergency. A quick plunge, down he goes out of sight. The faint light discloses Belle's form lying cross-ways of the abutment, and under one of the ice-breakers. There is a deep, a terrible silence, and then the boy arises, with the girl's form clasped with his left arm while he struggles to keep the double burden above the water.

Two or three tiffets are fastened together by a man upon the bridge, lowered, and Bill with his unconscious load is saved.

This happened last Christmas-Eve. We don't like to prolong stories, and will draw this little article to a close, by simply saying that Bascomb's boy Bill is now a model young man, respected and beloved by all who know him.

CURIOUS AND OTHER MATTERS.

EAGLE STORIES.

A correspondent at Stratherick sends an eagle story which Rod and Gun gives in his own words: "Mr. Alexander Shaw, farmer, Oldtown, Stratherick, was going his usual rounds to look after his sheep. While going past a clump of birch wood among very long heather, he fancied he heard a peculiar flutter among the bushes. He took little notice, but, the noise being repeated, he went to see what was ado. He found two golden eagles fighting firmly fixed in each other with beak and talons. On his approaching one of the birds noticed the intrusion, and let go his hold. The other held his opponent fast in his talons. Mr. Shaw then got up quite close and got hold of one of them. He put his foot on the other one's neck. He searched his pockets and found a little bit of string, just enough to tie one of the eagles. While he was tying the one he kept he let the other one off. The bird was not able to take flight for a considerable time after being set at liberty, being much done out with the fight. The other one, which Mr. Shaw took home, does not seem to be any the worse. What seemes most strange is that eagles are seldom or never seen so low down the country. My belief is that they must have been fighting for a long time in the skies, the one having been pursuing the other till they fixed in each and dropped."

Another story of the same class is from Mull: "One day recently Mr. McMorran, farmer, Kinlochspelve, observed a large golden eagle soaring at a considerable height above the farm steading, which is situated at the foot of Craig Ben. After whirling round for some time, it swooped down toward a patch of rough heather a short distance behind the farm-house, where Mr. McMorran observed a large gray cat, which began to defend itself bravely. By jumping nimbly aside, it eluded the claws of the eagle. With hair and tail erect, it stood facing the eagle, which made three unsuccessful attempts to carry him off. Eventually the cat got under a large bowlder which was near, on which the eagle sat for some time; but, as the cat did not again appear, the eagle soared away in search of other and quieter game. A pair of golden eagles have a nest on Craig Ben, and have bred there for years.

***

A Singular Freak of Nature.—A Russian with the euphonious name of Nicolai Wassilewitch Kobelkoff has recently been exhibiting himself in Paris, and is a striking example of what patience and perseverance can accomplish under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Kobelkoff was born without either arms or legs, a rudiment of the right arm near the shoulder being the only useful member left to him. He was the youngest of fourteen children, all perfectly formed, as also are five children of his own. He has always been in good health, and appears to suffer no special inconvenience from his lack of the ordinary appendages of the human body.

At his exhibitions he attaches a pen to the rudimentary arm, and writes a legible and even ornamental hand. He is also able to use a knife, fork, and spoon, and to drink from a glass. He takes a watch from his pocket and opens it, and can even thread a needle by the aid of his lips. He also accomplishes several acrobatic feats, such as moving along the floor by a series of leaps, turning somersaults, and, standing on his head.

Instances of persons born with one or more missing limbs are not very uncommon. The "armless man" is a familiar sight to patrons of circuses and dime museums, and such people frequently attain great dexterity in using their feet as a substitute for their hands. But cases like this one, where all the members are wanting, are much less numerous, although not entirely unknown; and the patience and ingenuity with which Kobelkoff has partially overcome his misfortunes are even more remarkable than his peculiar deformity.

***

Some Interesting Comparisons.—A man who doesn't mind devoting his time to the making of comparisons has made the following geographical discoveries: Greece is about as large as the State of Vermont; Palestine is about one-fourth as large as the State of New York; the Caspian Sea is long as from Philadelphia to Pittsburg; Hindoostan is about twenty-five times as large as the State of New York, and the desert of Sahara has almost exactly the number of square miles the United States has. The Mediterranean Sea is big enough to cut the United States in two across its greatest breadth, making an open sea from New York to Vancouver. Great Britain and Ireland have about the same number of square miles as Arizona: Madagascar is about as large as New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia and North Carolina combined, while the area of England is no greater than that of the State of Iowa.

***

To Tell One's Age.—Give the number of the month in which you were born. Double it.

Add five. Multiply by fifty. Add age. Subtract 365. Multiply by 100. Add number of day of the month on which you were born. Add 11,500. In the result the first two left-hand figures will be the month, the second two the age, the third two the day of the month.

* * *

PORTRAITS ON THE CURRENCY.—The *Washington Star* gives this list of protraits on the national currency: On United States notes—$1, Washington; $2, Jefferson; $5, Jackson; $10, Webster; $20, Hamilton; $50, Franklin; $100, Lincoln; $500, General Mansfield; $1000, De Witt Clinton; $5000, Madison; $10,000, Jackson. On silver certificates—$10, Robert Morris; $20, Commodore Decatur; $50, Edward Everett; $100, James Monroe; $500, Charles Sumner; $1000, W. L. Marcy. On gold notes—$20, Garfield; $50, Silas Wright; $100, Thomas H. Benton; $500, A. Lincoln; $1000, Alexander Hamilton; $5000, James Madison; $10,000, Andrew Jackson.

* * *

LONG LIFE.—According to the testimony of a prominent physicians, if we desire to enjoy long long life, it behooves us to control our passions with a strong check-rein. He says:—

But few men die of age. Almost all die of disappointment, passional, mental, or bodily toil, or accident. The passions kill men sometimes, very suddenly. The common expression, choked with passion, has little exaggeration in it; for even though not suddenly fatal, strong passions shorten life. Strong-bodied men often die young—week men live longer that the strong, for the strong use their strength and the weak have none to use. The latter take care of themselves; the former do not. As it is with the body, so it is with the mind and temper. The strong are apt to break, or like the candle, to run; the weak burn out. The inferior animals, which live, in general, regular and temperate lives, have generally their prescribed term of years. The horse lives twenty-five years; the ox fifteen or twenty; the lion about twenty; the dog ten or twelve; the rabbit eight; the guinea-pig six or seven years. These numbers all bear a similar proportion to the time the animal takes to grow to its full size. But man, of all the animals, is the one that seldom comes to his average. He ought to live a hundred years, according to the physiological law, for five time twenty are one hundred; instead of that he scarcely reaches, on the average, four times his growing period; the cat six times; the rabbit even eight times the standard of measurement. The reason is obvious—man is not only the most irregular and the most intemperate, but the most laborious and hard worked of all animals. He is also the most irritable of all animals; and there is reason to believe, though we can not tell what an animal scarcely feels, that, more than any other animal, man cherishes wrath to keep it warm, and consumes himself with the fire of his own reflections.

* * *

DAZZLING FISH YARNS.—A traveler who has recently returned from a trip through British Columbia says that one day last November it was possible to lay boards on top of small fish in a small stream, which empties into the Fraser and pass over, as if on a living pontoon bridge, to the opposite bank. The fish had been driven into the stream by the back-water of the Fraser and were packed together like sardines in a can.

Many curiouse fish have been brought to light by the artesian wells which are being sunk from time to time in various parts of Florida. At the Ponce de Leon Well, star fish of an unknown species were found at a depth of 1,000 feet, and from a well near Brooks Springs several fish covered with a shaggy coat of hair were thrown up. At other places fish that were totally blind were met with at a depth of 600 to 1,500 feet.

A huge devil-fish was captured in Victoria Harbor by three adventurous fishermen. The monster weighed over a hundred pounds and measured several feet across the back. It was taken alive and pulled into the boat, where it promptly seized hold of seats, oars everything else that was moveable with its innumerable suckers. The men were forced into the very stem and stern of the boat, but there was a vital spot between the great fish's eyes and a boat-hook soon found it.

* * *

A $2,000 WATCH.—"Talking about watches," said a jeweler, "the most expensive and complicated time-piece in the city is owned by Peter Gibson. It was made to his order in Switzerland and cost $1,000. He sent an order to the same maker about a year ago for another watch to cost $2,000. This watch, which he expects to receive some time this fall, shows the seconds, minutes, hours, days of the week, and month, and year. It registers the phases of the moon the rising and setting of the sun, names the periods of the morning and evening stars, eclipses of the sun and moon, and a score of other natural phenomena which can be determined by calculation. Like the other, the watch is his own design.

* * *

KING CHARLES AT BASCOBEL.—When King Charles the Second, of England, was fleeing from his enemies, he arrived in a wood near a place called Bascobel, which belonged to one of his friends. The people knew that it would not be safe to keep the king in the house, as a band of soldiers was expected every hour, so they took him out into a field and hid him in the top of an oak tree, and there he remained all day watching the soldiers who were searching for him through the branches. He had one companion with him, an officer of his army. When night came the king and his companion descended from the tree and continued their flight.

EDITOR'S DRAWER.

THINGS PLEASANT AND OTHERWISE.

POETRY WITH A POINT.

You can lead a horse to water,
But you cannot make him drink;
You can send a fool to college,
But you cannot make him think;
You may keep your daughter strumming
From morn till afternoon,
But you can't make her a player
If she hasn't a tune.

You can never make a farmer
Of a boy that loves the sea,
Though you may make him plough and plant
And whoa and haw and gee.
It's no use to swear and bluster
Because your only son
Prefers the girl he met in the car
To your selected one;
You might as well switch off the track,
For love is lord of pelf,
And besides it's more than likely
That you know how 'tis yourself.

You cannot make a citizen,
Let him be black or white,
Of the man who doesn't known enough
To cipher, read and write.
You cannot change the rooster's strut,
Nor make the layers crow,
Though you may honestly believe
It would be better so.

You cannot make a parson
Of the stage—struck Romeo lad;
And if you ever do succeed
You'll wish you never had.
There is only one thing meaner,
And that's to have to see
The name of your neighbor's numbskull
Finished with an M. D.
But all these things and more beside,
We may expect to bear,
Until the numbskull kills us,
And the Romeo says the prayer.

* * *

Old Dabbs and Jim Carter, two colored men, having grown tired of farming, came to the city, and opened a kind of grocery store. Dabbs was a shrewd, bow-legged man, with broad feet, and with a nose shaped like the half of a pear. Carter was young and inexperienced. After the stock had been purchased Dabbs remarked:—

"Carter, I'se de olest. In dis case hit's naissary fur yer ter be de jungler podner."

"All right," said Carter. "I don't keer what my name is, but I wants half de money whut comes in ober de counter."

"Dat's a fack, Carter. Yer'll make a sharp business man. Dar's a lot ob niggers got dar eyes on dis sto', but we'll fool 'em. Carter, does yer owe any debts in dis worl'?"

"Lemme see; yes, I owes a man fur a saddle blanket."

"How long hab you owed him?"

"'Bout five years."

"How much wuz hit wurf?"

"'Bout two dollars."

"Lemme count de intrust. Two is two, added onto de five, duplex fractions comin' in twixt de two an' de five; compoun' catharic fractions comin' in twixt de duplex fractions. Nine's a nine, wid ten as a podner. Ten goes 'way, an' leben stans up. Mr. Carter, yer owes dat man 'leben hundred dollars an' a quarter."

"How's dat?"

"Why, cordin' ter de intrust. De intrust is awful heaby. Hit farly makes a man sweat. Hit breaks up de white man, and robs de niggar of his labor. Dat man could come and break up our sto'. He could sell us out. I heard a plantation nigger talking 'bout us yesterday. Now ef yer wuz de signer partner, which means de oldest, de man couldn't do nothin'. Dis is a fault ob de law. De laigeslature is a awful rascally set of fellers. Well, now yer mus' be m y silent podner. Does yer heah?"

"I'se lis'enin'."

"Den de man can't tech yer. I'se got a head as long as a water million. Wall, now, lemme read yer this paper."

Then Dabbs read the following:—

"Dis heah is ter certify dat Dabbs and Carter is podners. Dabbs is de action podner, an Carter is de silen' podner. Dis is also ter certify dat so soon as Dabbs quits bein' an action podner de whole sto' 'longs to Carter, an' when Carter quits bein' de silen' podner widout anoder 'greement, de sto' all 'longs to Dabbs."

"Dis were wrot up by a cullud lawyer," said Dabbs. "Sign de paper."

The two men signed the instrument, and called in witnesses.

Next morning Dabbs came down to the store early, and when Carter arrived all of the witnesses were sitting in the store-room.

"Good-mornin', Dabbs," said Carter. Dabbs didn't say anything, and Carter continued, "Why de deuse doesn't yer speak ter me?"

"De sto' 's all mine," said Dabbs, arising, and turning to the witnesses.

"How's dat?" asked Carter.

"'Case yer's no longer a silent podner. Yer's talkin'. When a man talks he's not silent

Yer'll please leab my sto', Carter, an' go off down in de country. Ef yer'd stuck ter de 'greement, eberyt'ing would ben all right. Hit's plain ter be seen dat yer won't."

Carter appealed to the witnesses; but he was informed that he had broken silence, and of course was no longer a part owner of the store.

The disconsolate man left. He is now a candidate for the Legislature, and swears that if elected he will work for the repeal of the odious law.

***

ELI PERKINS' ADVICE TO LECTURERS.—A lecturer should always be letter proof in what he is going to say. He should never try any experiments on an audience. I always revolve a story or ancedote and repeat it fifty times privately before I give it to an audience. I want to be positively sure of its effects—I mean the main points. Of course extemporaneous stuff will creep in.

They told me down in Knoxville, Tennessee, how a good old hard-shell Baptist minister made a dreadful mistake by not knowing what he was going to say. He wanted to illustrate the three sects, Methodists, Episcopalians and hard-shell Baptists. So he accidentally took a chestnut out of his pocket one day, and, holding it up to the congregation began:—

"My friends, you see this chestnut; well this outer burr here is like the Methodists, soft and spongy, with no strength in it; see, I even mash it with my fingers," and, suiting the action to the words, he sloughed it off and disclosed the inner nut, and said:—

"This inner nut is like the Episcopalians, smooth and dry and velvety, with no substance in it."

"But the kurnul—the kurnul, my christian friends, is like our good old primitive hard-shell Baptist faith, full of fatness and sweetness."

He then proceeded to give his hearers an ocular demonstration of his illustration by crunching the chestnut between his teeth—and at the same time blowing the moldy meat all over the pulpit, and exclaiming, to the astonishment of everybody:—

"By Jinks! it's rotten!"

***

At a country church a young misiter, a great "swell," came to do duty one Sabbath. Entering the vestry, he doffed his coat and vest previous to donning the cassock and cloak, and looked round for the looking-glass which generally forms a part of the vestry furniture. He searched, however, in vain. At last, losing patience, he cried out:—

"Church offisaw! church offisaw!"

After calling out some time, the head of a gray-haired man peered in at the door, and a stentorian voice demanded:—

"What's yer wull?"

"Where's the mirraw?" demanded the minister.

"Sir?" said the other.

"The mirraw—the looking-glass?" said the minister impatiently.

"Oh, the lookin'-glass. Ye see, oor minister's sic a handsume man naterally, that he doesna need a lookin'-glass; but a'll bring ye a pail o' watter if ye like."

***

This is the way an old sport pictured the story of the "Prodigal Son." "Why, you see, the prodigal was a young fellow as lived along with the old man, a long time ago, and the old man staked him pretty liberal, and he was happy. But by and by he thought he'd go abroad. So he packed up his best clothes, and gettin' the old gent to 'ante up' for him, he started out travelin'. Well, he did firstrate for a time, till the 'cappers' got hold of him and run him in to a 'bank.' He wasn't up to the banking 'bis,' and you see the boys played him for a Granger. He got 'whip-sawed.' Every time he 'coppered' the 'ace' to win, an' played the 'king' upon it, he warn't thar. The bank 'bust' him flat and then he went to work a 'shovin' up' his clothes. An' every time he raised a little 'stake' he'd come and leave it in the 'bank,' until by and by he didn't have enough to get a square meal with, an' had to look around for a job. He couldn't strike nothin' but a hog-ranche, though, an' he went to work on it for his board and clothes. But it was might thin living. The boss kind o' played off on him, and made him 'hash' with the hogs. So by and by he sickened on the hog-ranche, and made up his mind he'd go home and see if the old man wouldn't take him in again. And he went. The old man was powerful glad to see him. He give him a new rig, an' a gold ring, an' set him on his feet again. An' he got lots of wealth, an' started on the 'banks,' playin' full limits every bet. That's what's the 'Prodigal Son.'"

***

There is a lurid fascination to a woman in shopping that a man's imagination can never realize. Take the concentrated enjoyment a man gets out of smoking, chewing, base-ball, pool, poker, and church sociables, and you do not begin to size up the unction of a healthy young wife turned loose in the street, with a fifty-dollar bill in her pocket. She is in for a regular bender, a wild dissipation of laces, ruffles, and things, flaunting around from counter to counter in a thrilling ecstacy of pricing cottons, and matching colors. The beautiful dream is over some time. She releases her last nickel, which she has providently tied up in a corner of her handkerchief, to pay her car fare with, and hurries home, her head aching ready to split, her feet bursting the narrow bounds of her dainty boots, and her heart racked with a sickening

anxiety lest Jones' clerk should change those clocked hose for something of inferior quality, or that the sweet delusion in cheap print will not wash after all.

***

A garrulous old soldier, was in the habit of frequently dropping into the sanctum of an editor and pestering him with stories about his old campaigns and battles. One day, just as the editor was in the bustle of "going to press," he came with the generous but ill-timed desire of giving information for an article on modern warfare. He laid a map on the desk and proceeded to point out upon it the various positions in a battle in which he had taken part.

"This," he said, pointing out with the stump of a pencil a certain part on the map, "is where the enemy were massed in front of us. Here"—pointing to another place—"is where our division was drawn up in the square. We deployed in this direction, and our left wing was attacked by the enemy on this knoll. Just at this point I was wounded on the left shoulder, and two hundred yards farther on I got my right arm shattered by a piece of one of our own shells."

"But," broke in the irritated and sarcastic editor, who was an unfortunate stammer, "where d-d-did you get y-y-your b-b-brains bl-blown out?"

***

A verdant-looking couple appeared one day at the parsonage of an minister in one of the Eastern States, and the young man awkwardly explained that they wanted to be married. It was raining in torrents, as it had been all day. The candidates for matrimony had come in an open buggy, sheltered only by a single umbrella, and were so thoroughly drenched that it was necessary for them to dry their garments by the kitchen fire before the minister could proceed with the ceremony. When they reappeared, he said:—

"It's bad to have such a rainy day."

"Wall," said the bridegroom, with the well-marked nasal twang of a rural Yankee, "that's just exactly why we come! You see it's pourin' so hard we couldn't do nothin' else; so we jest thought it was a good time to git married. Wouldn't have come if it'd been ploughin' weather."

***

Benjamin Franklin was dining with a small party of distinguished gentlemen, when one of them said:—

"Here are three nationalities represented. I am French, and my friend there is English, and Mr. Franklin is an American. Let each propose a toast."

It was agreed to, and the Englishman's turn came first. He arose, and, in the tone of the Briton bold, said:—

"Here's to great Britain, the sun that gives light to the nations of the earth!"

The Frenchman was rather taken aback at this; but he proposed:—

"Here's to France, the moon whose magic rays move the tides of the world!"

Franklin then rose with an air of quaint modesty and said:—

"Here's to George Washington, the Joshua of America, who commanded the sun and moon to stand still—and they stood still!"

***

On the Best Authority.—A story is told of a trial for burglary in which one of the jurymen seemed to be certain of the prisoner's innocence, and pleaded for him so eloquently and so convincingly that the eleven others, who had no particular bias either way, allowed themselves to be argued into returning a verdict of "not guilty." A few days later fresh facts came to light which proved the accused man's innocence beyond a doubt; and one of the eleven wavering jurymen, happening to meet with the man who had so powerfiluy influenced them all, thanked him warmly for having saved them from the commission of a great injustice.

"And yet, now I think of it," he added, "you could not have known then anything about the new facts, so how could you be so sure that the man was innocent?"

"Well," replied the other, "my chief reason for thinking that he did not committed the crime was that I committed it myself."

***

Plenty of "E's.—The following paragraph now going the rounds contains fifty-seven words, one hundred and twelve e's, and no other vowel:

"We feel extreme feebleness when we seek perfect excellence here. We well remember men everywhere err. Even when Eden's evergreen trees sheltered Eve the serpent crept there. Yet, when tempted, when cheerlessness depressed, when helplessness fetters, when we seem deserted—then we remember Bethlehem; we beseech the Redeemer's help. We ever need the rest blessed expect."

***

A little girl who had no brothers or sisters for associates, was given a pretty kitten, of which she was very fond and proud. A member of the family ventured to suggest in her presence one day, probably to plague her a bit, that she would not think so much of it when it got to be a great big tomcat, to which she quickly and indignantly replied:—

"Well, I guess my little kitten never will be a tomcat!"

"Do you know what a tomcat is?" was asked.

"Yes, I do," she replied, manifesting all the scorn and contempt for the creature she could command: "It is one that climbs trees and acts like a boy."

A BOY'S ESSAY ON COLUMBUS.—The present Columbian times have recalled to public memory the biography of Christopher Columbus as it was written by a school boy in the Midlands, England, twenty years ago. The master told the boys to write each a short essay on the great navigator, and the following is the only one that has withstood the ravages of the tooth of Time. We give it complete:—

"Columbus was a man who could make an egg stand on end without breaking it. The King of Spain said to Columbus, 'Can you discover America?' 'Yes,' said Columbus, 'if you will give me a ship.' He had a ship and sailed over the sea in the direction where he thought America ought to be found. The sailors quarrelled and said they believed there was no such place; but after many days, the pilot called to him, and said, 'Columbus, I see land.' 'Then that is America,' said Columbus. When the ship got near, the land was full of black men. Columbus said, 'Is this America?' 'Yes, it is,' said they. 'I suppose you are the niggers?' 'Yes,' they said, 'we are;' and the chief said, 'I suppose you are Columbus?' 'You are right,' said he. Then the chief turned to his men and said, 'There is no help for it; we are discovered at last.'"

HAVING A BLOW OUT.

I.—Having been presented with a new patent gas stove.

II.—Mr. Biffer proceeds to try it.

III.—He turns on the gas, and then

IV.—Lights it.